



2020-2024

STATE OF ILLINOIS
WIOA UNIFIED
STATE PLAN

ADVANCING PROSPERITY
THROUGH A SKILLED
WORKFORCE

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Executive Summary

In January 2019, two days after his inauguration, Governor Pritzker issued Executive Order #3 (EO 3) and directed the State to prioritize revitalizing economic growth and creating economic opportunity in communities across the state using a data-informed, demand-driven framework for improving the quality of the State's workforce. Building upon that direction, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) guided the development of the WIOA State Unified Plan that follows. This plan outlines the vision, principles and goals for the integration of workforce, education and economic development programs for the State of Illinois. It provides guidance to Illinois' workforce development partners as they seek to implement the Governor's vision to improve our State's economy and the lives of its workers.

In the spring of 2019, IWIB members and State agency leaders representing core and required partners came together to review and update the vision, principles and goals for the State of Illinois. The National Governor's Association facilitated this process by leading exercises, such as identifying strengths and weaknesses, prior to drafting updated language. This leadership process resulted in an updated strategic vision and principles that were ultimately approved by the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board. The vision and principles provide a foundation for the Unified State Plan, Regional Plans and Local Plans.

Illinois' 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.

Our Guiding Principles:

- Demand-Driven Orientation - Through a sector strategy framework, the state will support the system assessment of business needs for talent across local, regional and state levels.
- Strong Partnerships with Business at All Levels - Strong partnerships with business will assist employers to define in-demand skills and articulate those needs to education and training providers.
- Pathways to Careers of Today and Tomorrow - The development of career pathways that meet employers' skill needs today, while offering individuals clear opportunities to build and upgrade their skills, earn industry-recognized credentials, and advance their career over time.
- Cross-agency Collaboration and Connections - There will be a focus on improving strategic connections across all components and levels of the education and workforce systems.
- Integrated Service Delivery - Illinois will more effectively serve business and individual customers by implementing service integration strategies.

- Equitable Access and Opportunity for All Populations - Connecting individuals with relevant supports, such as transportation, childcare and transition services will help targeted populations prepare for and advance along a career pathway.
- Clear Metrics for Progress and Success - Illinois will develop or adopt metrics that will monitor for progress and success informing continuous improvement and innovation efforts.
- Focus on Continuous Improvement and Innovation - Illinois will advance systemic and sustainable change that drives us to be prompt, agile and responsive to changing economic conditions.

State Goals: As was detailed in the report responding to the Governor’s EO 3, charting a new course for Illinois’ economic future requires that we learn from the past. We must scale up practices that have proven effective, re-engineer those that have not delivered on promised success, and abandon those with little to no return. Six lessons learned will help guide our path forward and form the basis for the statewide goals that follow:

- Workforce development efforts must support the industries and occupations targeted at the state and regional levels while responding to the needs of local employers.
- The skills gap is arguably Illinois’ most serious barrier to economic prosperity. Building a pool of job seekers and workers with the right skills at the right time is essential.
- Our job creation efforts must be statewide and extend to employers of all sizes. Effective economic development strategies are needed in urban and rural areas alike. Also, two-thirds of the nation’s private-sector workforce is employed by small business. Strategies to stabilize, retain, and grow this bedrock of our economy are urgently needed throughout Illinois.
- All of our investments must generate an acceptable return on investment. These returns must be measured in terms of the outcomes most meaningful to Illinois residents – such as jobs, earnings, and long-term career prospects.
- Programs to prepare individuals for the workplace too often ignore the harsh economic realities of low-income populations. Education and training models that offer an “earn as you learn” component enable economically at-risk populations to acquire new skills while supporting themselves and their families. For others, support for childcare and transportation can mean the difference between advancing on a career pathway and remaining in poverty.
- The system-level change we envision will require that all State agencies with a stake in education, job creation, or workforce development support each other.

Goals for Achieving the State’s Strategic Vision

1. *Unite workforce development partners around regional cluster strategies:* Regional cluster strategies will focus resources on the industries with the highest potential to add jobs and

increase prosperity in regions across Illinois. These strategies bring together the public and private sectors in each region to build on their unique strengths.

2. *Prepare Illinois' workers for a career, not just their next job:* Regardless of background, life circumstances, or education level, Illinois workers can be prepared for high-demand careers by developing core academic, technical, and essential employability skills throughout their lifetimes.
3. *Connect job seekers with employers:* Assist Illinois businesses to find the productive workers they need, through more efficient training and better services for job seekers and employers.

State Strategies to Achieve These Goals: Six essential state strategies underpin Illinois' commitment to engage and support all parts of our education, workforce, and economic development systems.

Strategy 1: Coordinate Demand-Driven Strategic Planning at the State and Regional Levels

The IWIB has a demand-driven strategic planning process grounded in strong partnerships across education (secondary and postsecondary), workforce and economic development at the State, regional and local levels.

Strategy 2: Support Employer-Driven Regional Sector Initiatives

The IWIB continues to guide this important work to ensure investment in resources and promotion of skills and careers in targeted industry and high demand occupations.

Strategy 3: Provide Economic Advancement for All Populations through Career Pathways

State and regional sector initiatives will provide the foundation for sector-based career pathway initiatives that expand career and educational opportunities for students and workers, including those facing multiple barriers to employment to achieve economic advancement.

Strategy 4: Expand Service Integration

Defined as “a combination of strategies to align and simplify access to one-stop center services and supports for employers, job seekers, and workforce professionals within the system,” the goal of service integration in Illinois is to provide the best experience possible for all WIOA customers.

Strategy 5: Promote Improved Data-Driven Decision Making

Partner agencies will design, develop and use the statewide public-private data infrastructure (see Strategy 6, below) to provide both employers and job seekers with information and tools to promote and access job openings, review changing labor market trends and opportunities, identify funding opportunities and fund education, training and support services.

Strategy 6: Advance Public-Private Data Infrastructure

Focusing on the IWIB Vision, the board will ensure measures are implemented that will guide Illinois through sustainable, systemic change. It will expand and improve the Illinois public-private

data infrastructure to support the five strategies described above. This requires the integration of labor market information with State education and workforce longitudinal data systems, as well as program and case management systems.

To assure that the IWIB can lead the efforts of Illinois in these six strategic areas, it has identified a need to strengthen the effectiveness and impact of its members and the membership of local workforce boards. Strategies will be developed to identify appropriate methods of outreach between the IWIB and local boards, as well as the technical assistance and resource needs that will allow board members to better understand their functions and responsibilities and ensure accountability in effectively conducting their business.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Comment: The IWIB is responsible for overseeing the development, implementation and modification of the Unified State Plan and for convening all relevant programs, required partners and stakeholders. The State agencies responsible for the administration of the core and required programs have reviewed and commented on appropriate operational planning portions of the Unified State Plan. Illinois' Unified State Plan was released for public comment on January 10, 2020 to allow interested stakeholders to participate in the development of the plan. During the public comment period, three public forums across the state (locations: Chicago, Springfield and Ina), as well as a webinar and surveys of the business and organized labor communities, were conducted to provide ample opportunity for public feedback and input on the 2020 Unified State Plan (see the "Other Appendices" section for more on the public comments received and other stakeholder feedback).

II. Strategic Elements

II. a. Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis

1. Economic and Workforce Analysis

A. Economic Analysis

As stated in the Executive Summary, in January 2019, two days after his inauguration, Governor Pritzker issued Executive Order #3 (EO3) (Attachment AA, https://www.illinoisworknet.com/DownloadPrint/19612-Executive_Order_2019-03.pdf) and directed the State to place a priority on revitalizing economic growth and creating economic opportunity in communities across the state using a data-informed, demand-driven framework to improving the quality of the State's workforce. The response to the EO3 was an Action Agenda (Attachment AB https://www.illinoisworknet.com/DownloadPrint/EO3_Full_Report_04.14.19.pdf), which is driving workforce development and job creation strategies discussed throughout the 2020 Unified State Plan. One action item in the EO3 Agenda was the creation of a data-driven methodology for selecting priority sectors and occupations, to be used across State education and workforce programs and be embedded in all State strategic plans. The Interagency Data Team, consisting of core partner data leaders, Labor Market Information (LMI) economists and researchers from Northern Illinois University, laid the initial groundwork for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified State Plan that would become the basis for a unified approach. [*Note: All attachments, tables and charts in this document are also available at [Illinois WIOA State Plan](#).*]

Alignment of Economic Analysis Across Multiple Strategic Plans

In 2019 there are three major Strategic Planning efforts underway with linkages to economic and workforce development in Illinois.

1. The Governor's Economic Development Plan developed by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Office of Program and Policy Development in consultation with the Governor's Office. The plan was released October 9, 2019.
2. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified State Plan (this document) jointly developed by the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board, (IWIB), State agencies that administer the WIOA Core Partner programs in Illinois (DCEO - Workforce Training; Illinois Community College Board - Adult Education; the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) - Labor Exchange, Business and Veteran's Services; and the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DHS-VR - Vocational Rehabilitation) in conjunction with the Governor's Office and with input from other federal workforce programs, business and industry, economic development, constituent population advocates and other interested stakeholders.
3. The Perkins V State Plan for Career and Technical Education, created by the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois State Board of Education, will be submitted in April 2020.

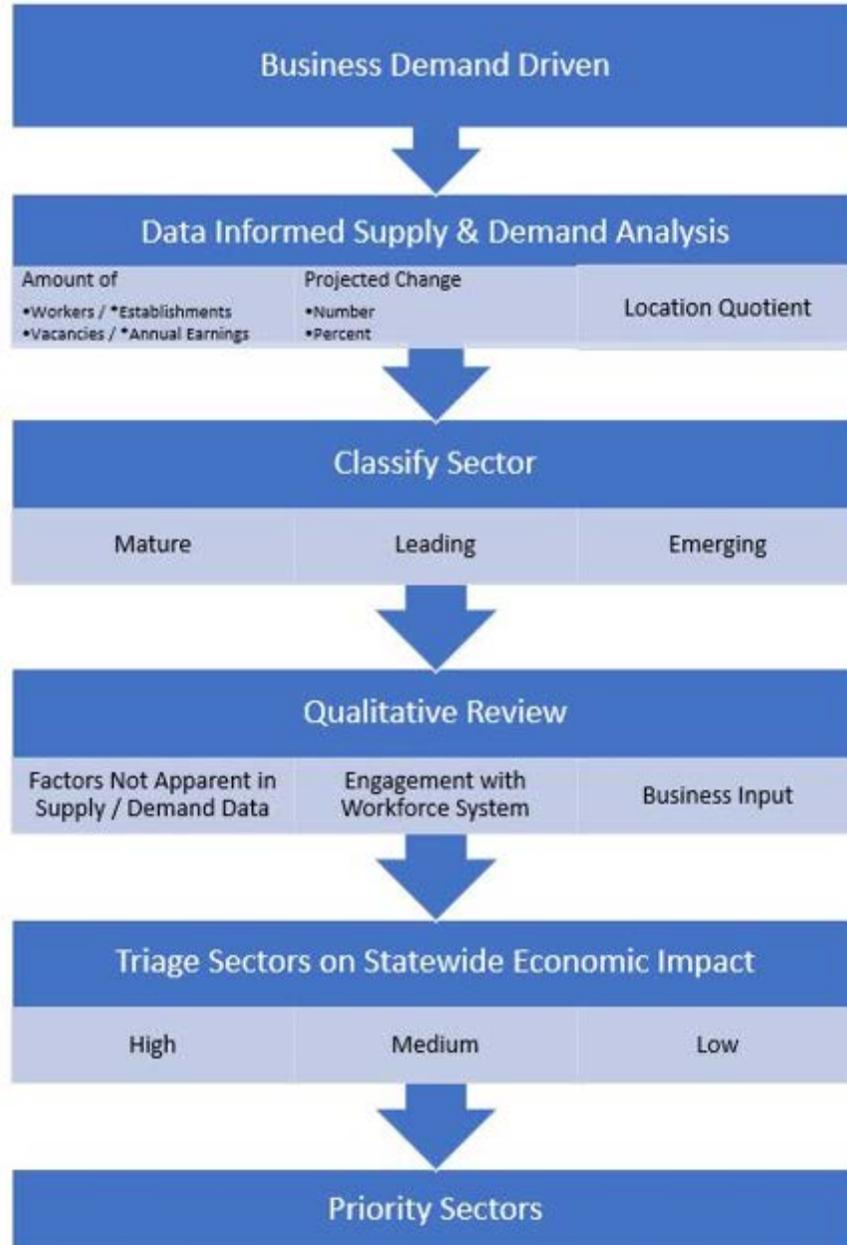
These plans all share the ultimate goal of improving the State's competitive position in the global economy and promoting community prosperity. Underneath these overarching goals, however, there are differences in the specific focus, context and requirements associated with each plan. For example, the Economic Development Plan is in response to state law, while the WIOA and Perkins V plans are required by federal law and must include certain content specified by federal guidance from the US Departments of Labor and Education.

The Economic Development Plan includes the Governor's vision for economic prosperity, with many elements directly related to workforce and education and also some elements less directly tied to these areas. The three priorities from the Economic Development Plan listed below demonstrate where overlaps with workforce and education exist; and in these cases, the federal program plans will align with the Governor's vision.

1. Lay the foundation for long-term growth - by investing in and fostering research and development, entrepreneurship, and innovation;
2. Reduce the equity gap by investing in, providing support to, and taking down barriers for economically disadvantaged populations; and
3. Attract more workers and businesses to Illinois by aggressively marketing the state and providing a solid foundation for business growth and attraction.

Data and Information Collection

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) employs the state's labor market economists that provide data and information to support state, regional, and local workforce and economic development initiatives. The economic and workforce analysis data are publicly available and support an analytic process that is easily replicable using those readily available data sources. The state also engages businesses, and both regional and local partners to regularly and systematically analyze and validate complementary data. The long-term goal is to collect and develop the most robust data sources possible.



The State of Illinois established an Interagency Data Team with representatives from the core program partners, including Employment Security, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and the Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) to select the data that are utilized in this economic and workforce analysis. Finally, the agencies and data analysts involved in developing Illinois' statutorily mandated Five-Year Economic Development Plan also met to ensure that the process they used to identify economic development targets was consistent with that used to support other statewide economic and workforce analyses.

The Interagency Data Team was tasked with developing a comprehensive methodology to identify priority sectors and occupations in Illinois. The Priority Sectors and Occupations Methodology Framework includes two foundational elements: 1) a business-demand basis for defining the sectors, industries and occupations that are most important in the Illinois economy; and 2) a robust analysis of relevant labor-market data. Initial stages of the framework (detailed in this plan) determine whether the sector is categorized as “mature,” “leading” or “emerging.” Subsequent stages will include a qualitative review that will incorporate key information that may not be readily apparent in raw data (such as emerging industry trends known due to ongoing business engagement activities). After all the data are analyzed and tested against “local knowledge” the team will triage sectors into categories of High, Medium and Lower importance to the economy.

The key data elements reviewed include:

- Number of workers
- Number of establishments
- Projected changes in workers and establishments
- Current location quotients
- Vacancies
- Average wages

This section of the Unified State Plan is focused on analyzing existing demand within industry and occupational categories. The Data Team reviewed data from various perspectives: sectors and industries at the high level using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) and occupational data using federal Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes.

NAICS is the standard used by Federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy. Like all data, NAICS does have some limitations and caveats. For example, NAICS classifies businesses based on their primary activities but a specific business may have significant activity in other sectors. For example, Wal-Mart's primary activity is a retailer, but it employs thousands of workers focused on Transportation / Distribution / Logistics at its distribution centers and in-house trucking division.

Readers are cautioned to not make assumptions on the types of businesses or occupations implied by high-level groupings.

For example, the NAICS “Information” sector includes industries primarily focused on: publishing, motion pictures, broadcasting, internet publishing and broadcasting, telecommunications, data processing etc. Occupations requiring “information technology” skills are embedded in companies from all sectors. We must look beyond the Information sector to discern the full extent of the supply and demand for jobs and workers needing IT skills. There are significant numbers of tech workers spread across manufacturing, finance, government and many other sectors. Likewise, “Energy” is not a sector in the NAICS model, but energy-related industries

and occupations are found in sectors such as: Construction; Manufacturing; and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, among others.

Cases like these require using SOC codes to look at occupational data for jobs that are widely scattered across various sectors and industries. The review of occupational information is included in the Workforce Analysis section. A partial listing of how industries are grouped into sectors and used by federal data sources is provided in Attachment F, “[BLS QCEW - Industries by Supersector and NAICS Code](#)”.

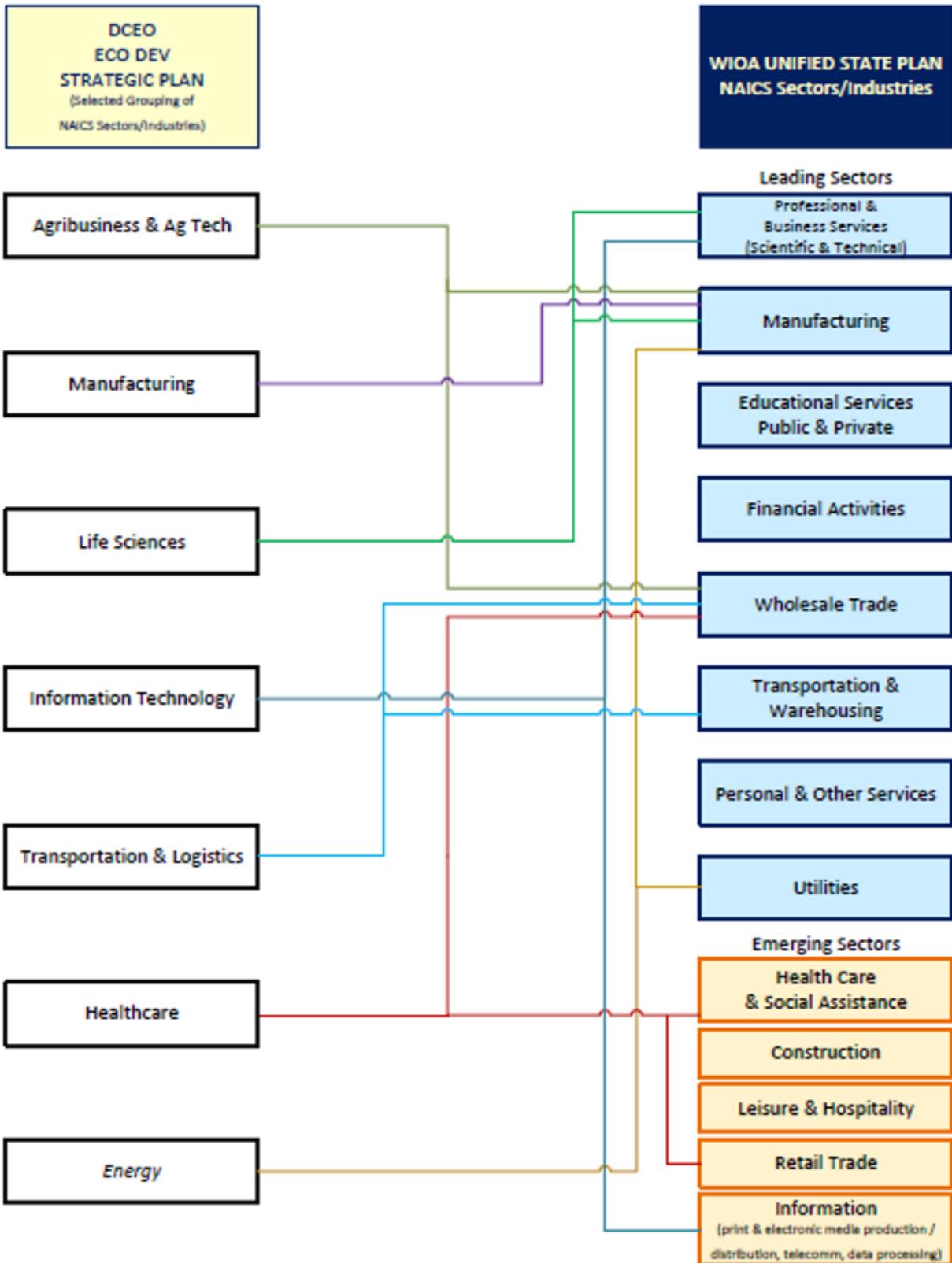
In the interest of promoting synergies with other planning efforts across Illinois for economic development, workforce development, and education, the industries in the Economic Development Plan were defined broadly. For example, the Agribusiness and Ag Tech sector includes traditional agricultural sectors such as crop production and animal production, food manufacturing sectors, and support activities and suppliers for farm activities. As another example, the Transportation and Logistics industry includes warehousing, wholesale trade and distribution, and companies involved in import-export activities. Each industry in the Economic Development Plan includes multiple sub-sectors, so that each region might have businesses and employees specialized in a different aspect of the supply chain.

The Five-Year Economic Development (ED) Plan prepared by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity was released on October 9, 2019. The ED Plan focuses on six categories of businesses grouped by primary areas of focus for the Governor and the State’s economic development efforts:

- Agribusiness and Agricultural Technology (Ag Tech)
- Energy
- Information Technology
- Life Sciences and Healthcare
- Manufacturing
- Transportation and Logistics

The following diagram indicates how the industry groupings in the Economic Development Plan align with the groupings used in the WIOA Unified State Plan.

DCEO Economic Development Plan / WIOA Unified State Plan Areas of Interest Crosswalk



Industries shown in the Unified State Plan will typically be described in terms different from those in the Economic Development Plan because implementation will require a more precise emphasis to meet the needs and conditions of each region. In many cases, the target industries by region will have self-evident linkages to those in the Economic Development Plan. For example, aerospace manufacturing in the Northern Stateline Region fits unambiguously in the Manufacturing sector. In other cases, a regional industry might have linkages to the Economic Development Plan that are not readily apparent, and those linkages will be clarified in the text of the Unified State Plan. For example, some professional services industries are classifiable under Information Technology.

To ensure that the first action area highlighted in Gov. Pritzker's EO3 -- "Unite workforce development partners around regional cluster strategies" -- is addressed across the entire education system, ISBE was included in the Interagency Data Team.

This collaborative approach aligns multiple planning processes and data sources around a common methodology for selecting high-impact regional clusters and associated in-demand occupations.

Additionally, the IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC), in conjunction with the Integrated Business Services Workgroup -- composed of IWIB business members, business outreach staff from the core partners, and other stakeholders -- has indicated a need to utilize current information from business owners, employer associations, partner agencies and other sources to complement Bureau of Labor Statistics data from Employment Security to reflect real-time employment conditions and business needs. The IWIB's Strategic Plan requires development of mechanisms for gathering and reporting on appropriate data and information.

i. Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Three of the most important economic benchmarks used by Illinois to understand our economic position, and to evaluate the effectiveness of our efforts to improve that position, are overall economic production, employment and earnings. Examining these three indicators across the past ten years provides an uncommonly stark description of Illinois' experience before, during and since the "Great Recession" during the final years of the first decade of the 21st century.

The main narrative told by the numbers in Table 1 is that growth in Illinois was slowed by the economic downturn -- more so than the nation overall, but not quite as much as our fellow states in the Great Lakes region (IL, IN, MI, OH and WI). Between 2008 and 2013, the state's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased by 3.6 percent compared to the US GDP growth of 5.7 percent. The GDP in the Great Lakes Region only grew 2.9 percent for the same period.

The story through 2018, the latest year for which data are available, shows that even though GDP growth in Illinois picked up, it lagged both the Great Lakes Region and the nation. The last five years have seen an increase in the state's GDP of 5.5 percent, which is less than the region's growth of 7.9 percent and the nation's 12.6 percent growth. Illinois has also lagged in employment growth. The state's employment rose 3.9 percent in the last five years, compared to an increase of 6.2 percent in the region and an 8.2 percent increase in employment for the nation. Earnings in Illinois

over the last five years (19.5 percent) have increased almost as much as the region (20.2 percent). Earnings in the nation have surpassed both Illinois and the region, growing by 24.3 percent.

Table 1: Illinois vs. Benchmark States vs. US: Change in GDP, Employment & Earnings over 10 years

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	Gross Domestic Product	Employment			Earnings				
	2008	2013	2018	2008	2013	2018	2008	2013	2018
ILLINOIS	669,430	724,616	764,212	6,238,611	5,956,749	6,191,319	303,356,400	320,099,400	382,432,700
Great Lakes Region*	2,216,224	2,279,835	2,460,125	22,331,008	21,371,659	22,686,623	949,757,600	1,011,665,200	1,216,206,400
United States	15,604,687	16,495,369	18,566,442	145,362,500	143,929,333	155,761,000	6,531,099,000	7,104,786,000	8,828,519,900

	Gross Domestic Product	Employment			Earnings				
	2008-2013	2013-2018	2008-2018	2008-2013	2013-2018	2008-2018	2008-2013	2013-2018	2008-2018
ILLINOIS	3.6%	5.5%	9.3%	-4.5%	3.9%	-0.8%	5.5%	19.5%	26.1%
Great Lakes Region*	2.9%	7.9%	11.0%	-4.3%	6.2%	1.6%	6.5%	20.2%	28.1%
United States	5.7%	12.6%	19.0%	-1.0%	8.2%	7.2%	8.8%	24.3%	35.2%

*Defined by the US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis to [include](#): Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin

Sources:

Gross Domestic Product: BEA/Haver Analytics; GDP in \$2012 dollars (Millions)

Employment: BLS/Haver Analytics; Household Employment, Not Seasonally Adjusted

Earnings: BEA/Haver Analytics; Data from Annual Personal Income, Components of Earnings by Place of Work, Wages and Salaries (Thousands)

The situation described by these numbers provides the setting for continuing implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The challenge for Illinois is to utilize WIOA and all of the partner programs to assist the state’s businesses to increase productivity, employment and earnings throughout the state.

Table 2 shows projected employment demand through 2026 for major industry sectors across Illinois. It is expected that the largest number of job openings will be created within the business services, leisure and hospitality, and health care sectors. Large percentage increases in employment are expected in these three sectors, as well as in construction, transportation and warehousing, and wholesale trade.

Table 2: Illinois Employment by Major Industry Sector

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Title	Base Year Employment 2016	Share of Statewide Base Year Employment 2016	Projected Year Employment 2026	Net Change 2016-2026	Ten-Year Percent Change 2016-2026	Location Quotient 2016
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	6,365,062	100.00%	6,763,811	398,749	6.26%	1.00
Agricultural Production	74,088	1.16%	74,812	724	0.98%	0.37
Natural Resources and Mining	8,031	0.13%	7,899	-132	-1.64%	0.35
Utilities	24,306	0.38%	25,324	1,018	4.19%	1.06
Construction	218,274	3.43%	240,128	21,854	10.01%	0.76
Manufacturing	573,671	9.01%	589,224	15,553	2.71%	1.12
Wholesale Trade	301,789	4.74%	332,870	31,081	10.30%	1.26
Retail Trade	617,318	9.70%	634,056	16,738	2.71%	0.94
Transportation and Warehousing	293,783	4.62%	322,519	28,736	9.78%	1.23
Information	99,654	1.57%	94,913	-4,741	-4.76%	0.87
Financial Activities	382,656	6.01%	395,060	12,404	3.24%	1.10
Professional and Business Services	931,586	14.64%	1,025,114	93,528	10.04%	1.12
Educational Services, Private and Public	565,016	8.88%	576,335	11,319	2.00%	1.26
Health Care and Social Assistance	789,915	12.41%	867,791	77,876	9.86%	0.96
Leisure and Hospitality	596,754	9.38%	679,927	83,173	13.94%	0.92
Personal and Other Services	268,418	4.22%	271,960	3,542	1.32%	1.11
Government*	348,065	5.47%	353,646	5,581	1.60%	0.38
Self Employed, Unpaid Family Workers and Others n.e.c.*	271,738	4.27%	272,233	495	0.18%	0.76

Projections Source: IL Department of Employment Security Statewide Long-Term Employment Projections.

LQ Source:

https://data.bls.gov/cew/apps/table_maker/v4/table_maker.htm#type=11&year=2016&qtr=4&own=5&area=17000&supp=0

Figure 1 utilizes percentage growth and a measure of industry importance in the state (Location Quotient, or LQ), with “bubble” size indicating the relative size of the industry. The location quotient is represented on the vertical axis of the chart and is a measure that compares employment in each sector with total employment in the state. A value of 1.0 indicates the industry is at equilibrium with statewide employment, values greater than 1.0 indicate the industry has a comparative advantage versus other sectors in Illinois, and values less than 1.0 indicate the industry has a comparative disadvantage versus other sectors in Illinois. The degree of comparative advantage or disadvantage increases as the value deviates from 1.0.¹

Figure 1: Bubble Chart Based on Table 2

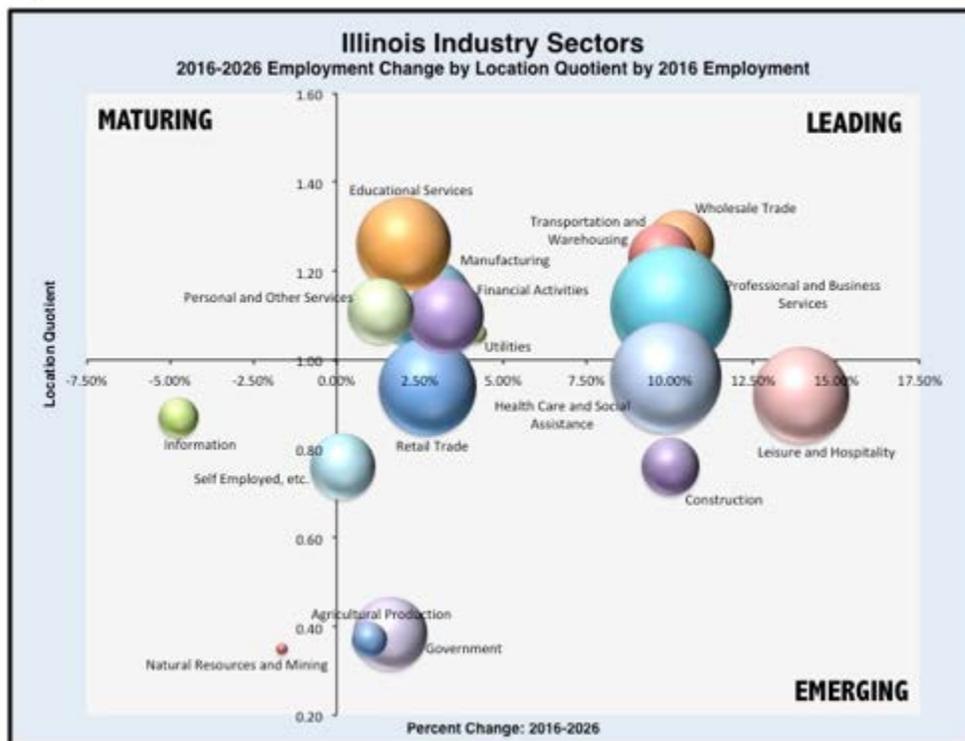


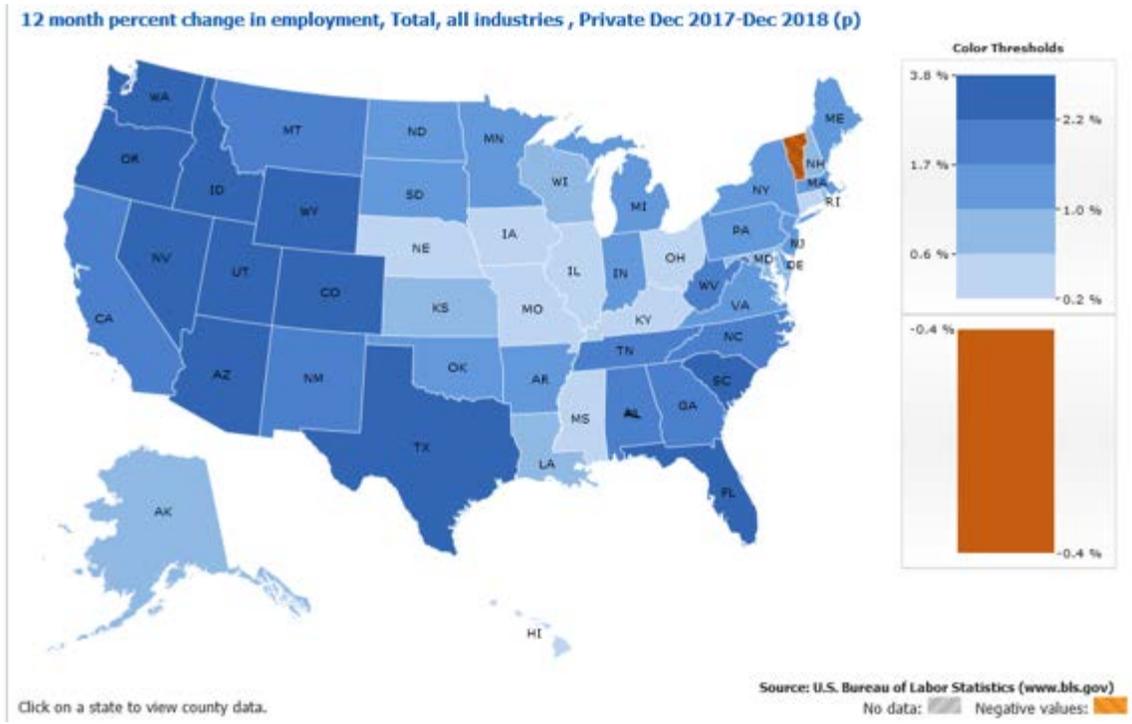
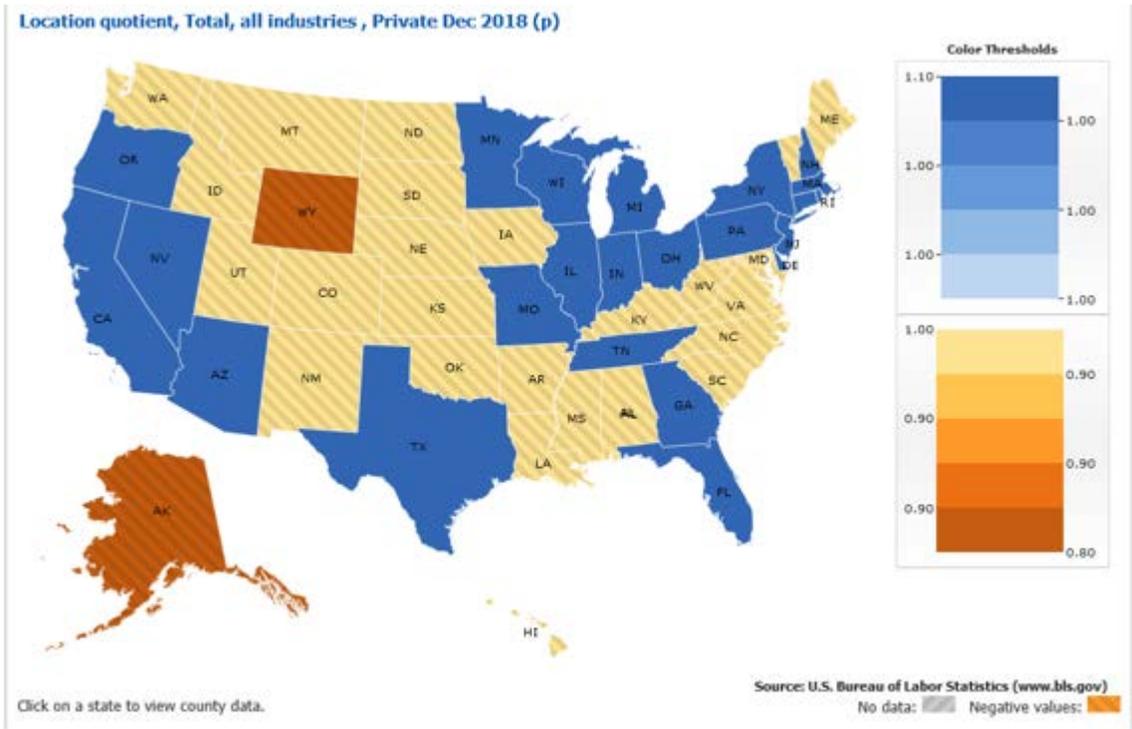
Figure 1 provides information on the “what” and “how much”, the sectors, projected employment changes and location quotients, respectively. Useful as it is, this information lacks geographic context. How does Illinois compare to other Midwest states, and to the nation? How do our in-state Economic Development Regions compare to each other?

The vital data point not available in this chart is the “where”. Using Bureau of Labor Statistics spatial analysis tools we are able to discern how Illinois compares to other states and which regions and counties in Illinois enjoy a comparative advantage in each sector. (See beta.bls.gov/maps/cew/us)

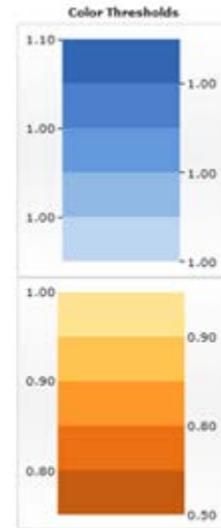
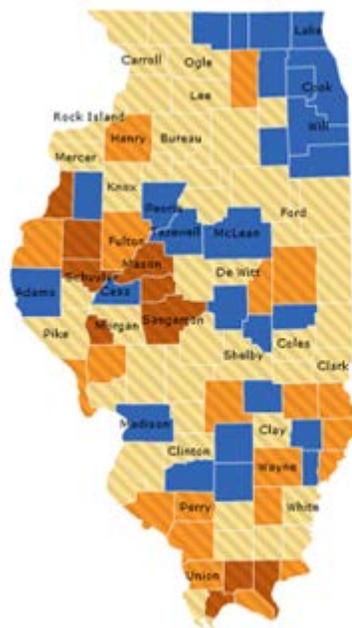
The location quotient for selected major industries in each county and EDR is provided on the accompanying maps (see below). These maps indicate where each industry has a comparative advantage versus the rest of the United States, based on private-sector employment. A value of 1.0 indicates the industry is at the national level, values greater than 1.0 indicate the industry has a comparative advantage versus the nation, and values less than 1.0 indicate the industry has a comparative disadvantage versus the nation. The degree of comparative advantage or disadvantage increases as the value deviates from 1.0. In addition to Location Quotient, our analysis included Percent Change in Employment as an indicator of recent changes in worker demand for these sectors.

Regions with a comparative advantage in a particular sector will be encouraged and supported in efforts to leverage their situation. Regions without a comparative advantage in a sector will be encouraged and supported in efforts to understand the root causes and use this information to target resources at sectors where the outcomes look most promising.

Maps 1-3 All Industries: LQ = 1.02 & Change in Employment = 0.3%



Location quotient, Total, all industries, Private Dec 2018 (p)

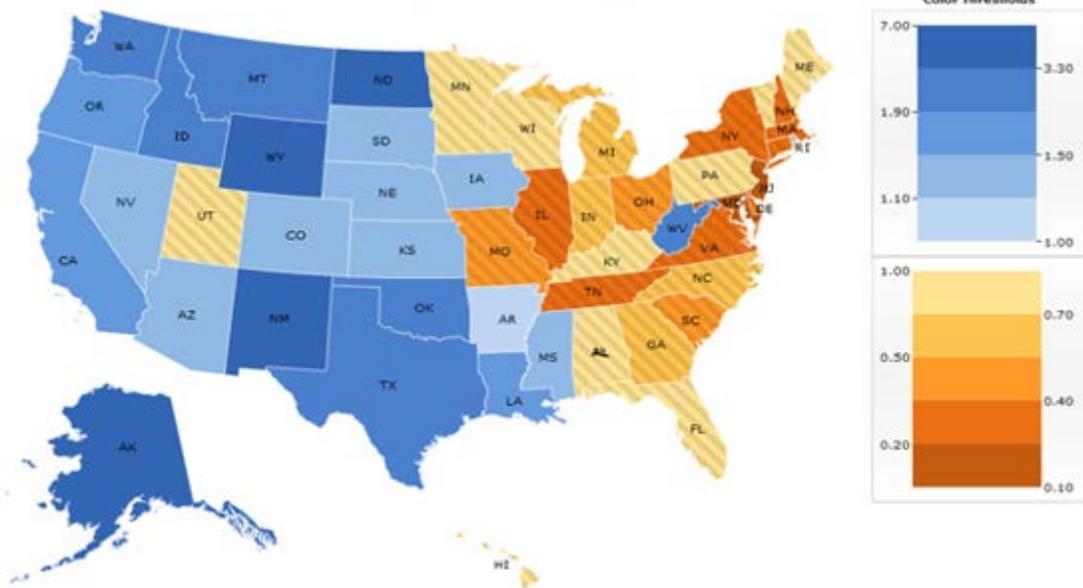


Click on a county to see industry data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)
No data: Negative values:

Maps 4-6 **Natural Resources & Mining**: LQ = 0.34 & Change in Employment = -0.4%

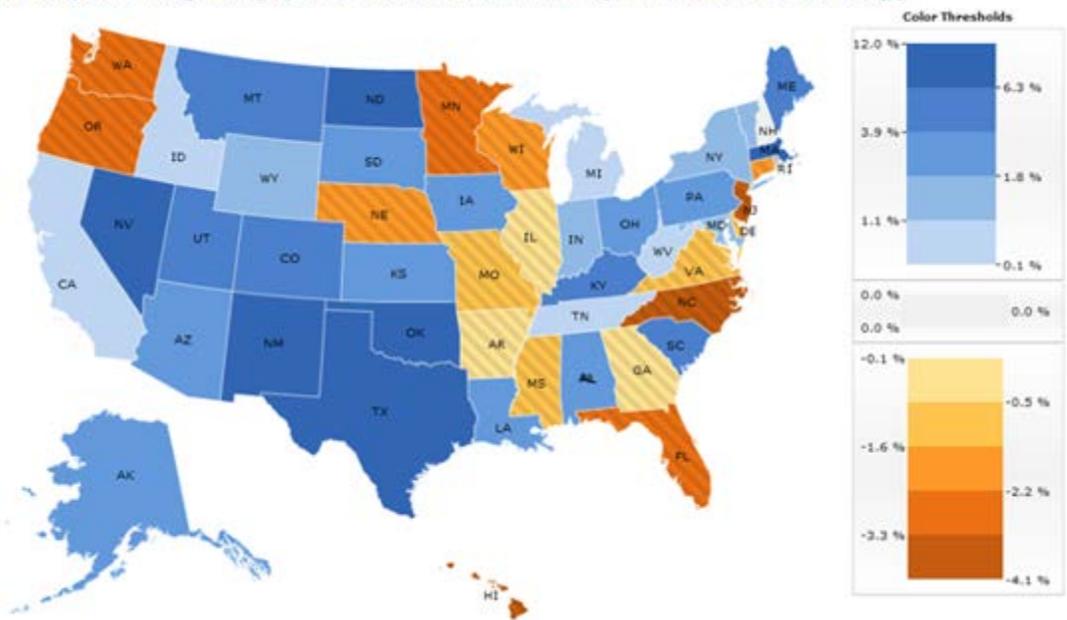
Location quotient, Natural Resources and Mining, Private Dec 2018 (p)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)
 No data: Negative values:

Click on a state to view county data.

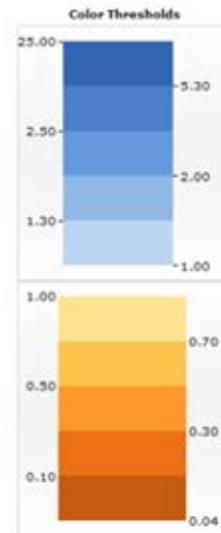
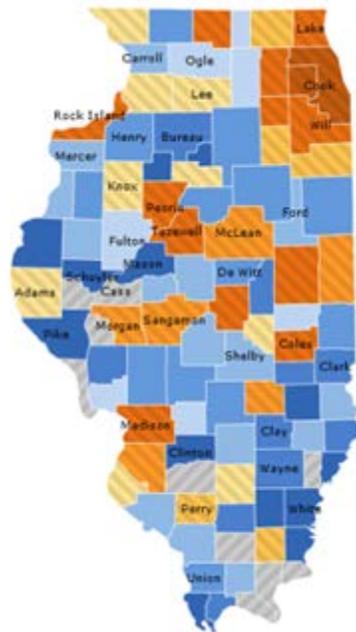
12 month percent change in employment, Natural Resources and Mining, Private Dec 2017-Dec 2018 (p)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)
 No data: Negative values:

Click on a state to view county data.

Location quotient, Natural Resources and Mining , Private Dec 2018 (p)

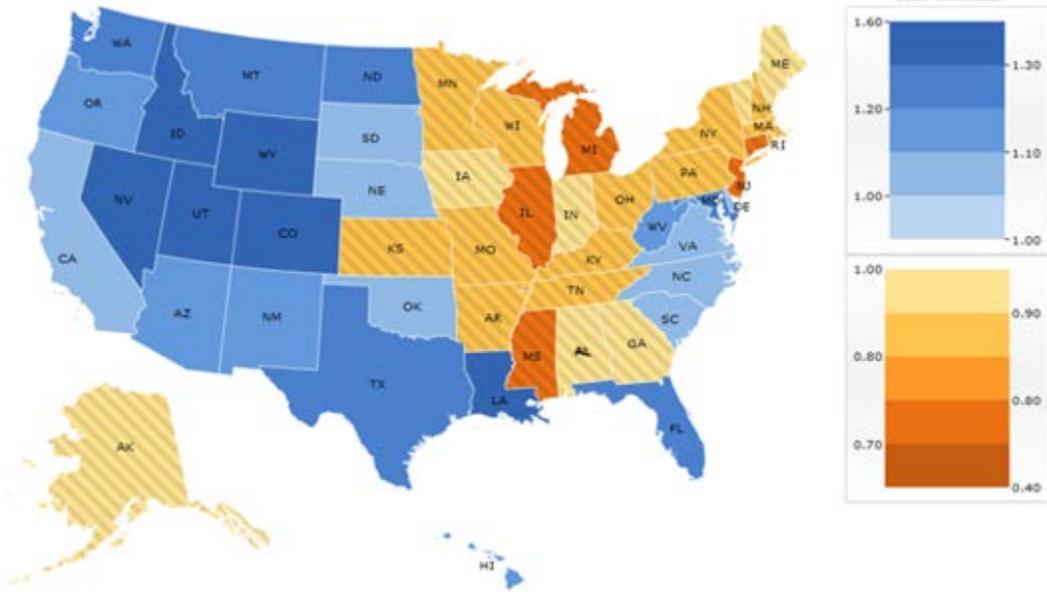


Click on a county to see industry data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)
No data: [grey box] Negative values: [orange box]

Maps 7-9 **Construction**: LQ = 0.75 & Change in Employment = 2.2%

Location quotient, Construction , Private Dec 2018 (p)

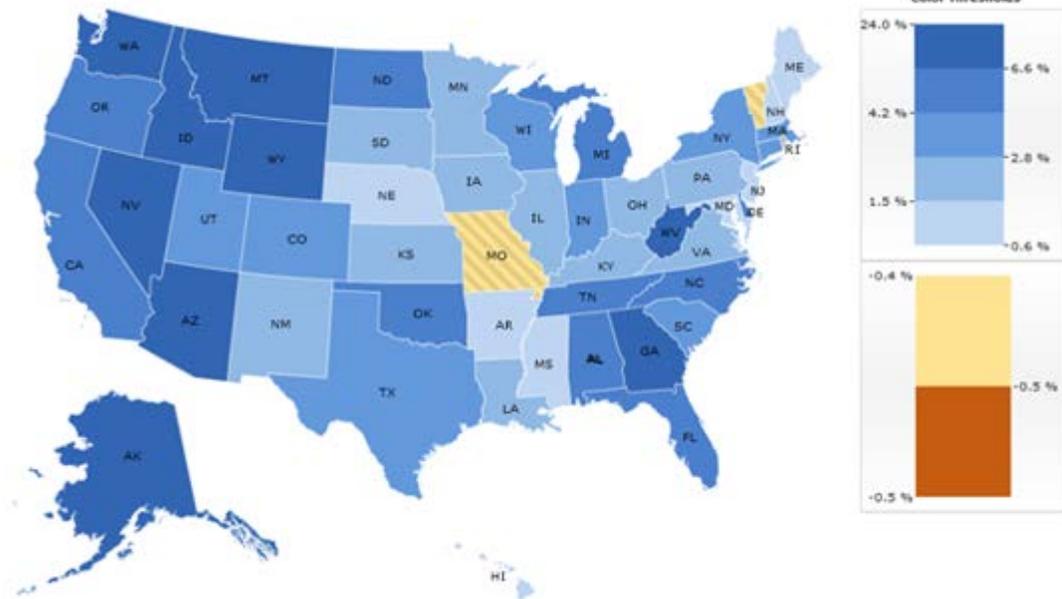


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

No data: Negative values:

Click on a state to view county data.

12 month percent change in employment, Construction , Private Dec 2017-Dec 2018 (p)

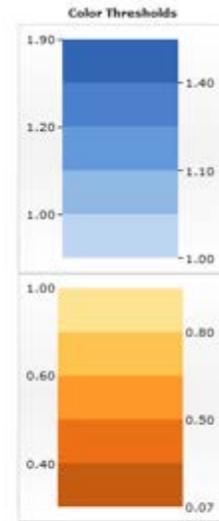
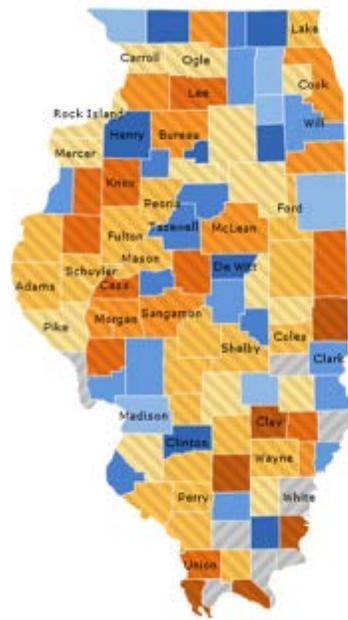


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

No data: Negative values:

Click on a state to view county data.

Location quotient, Construction , Private Dec 2018

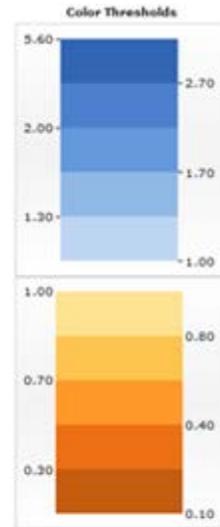
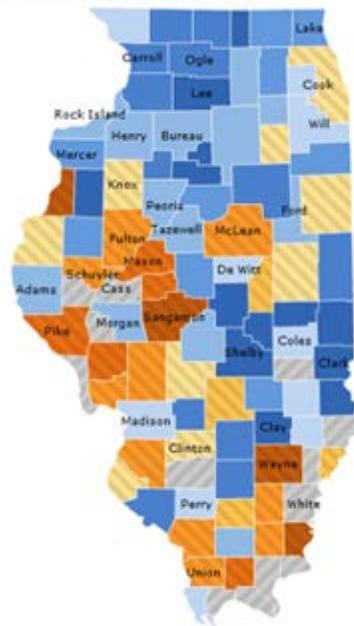


Click on a county to see industry data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)
No data: Negative values:

Maps 10-12 **Manufacturing**: LQ = 1.14 & Change in Employment = 1.4%

Location quotient, Manufacturing , Private Dec 2018 (p)

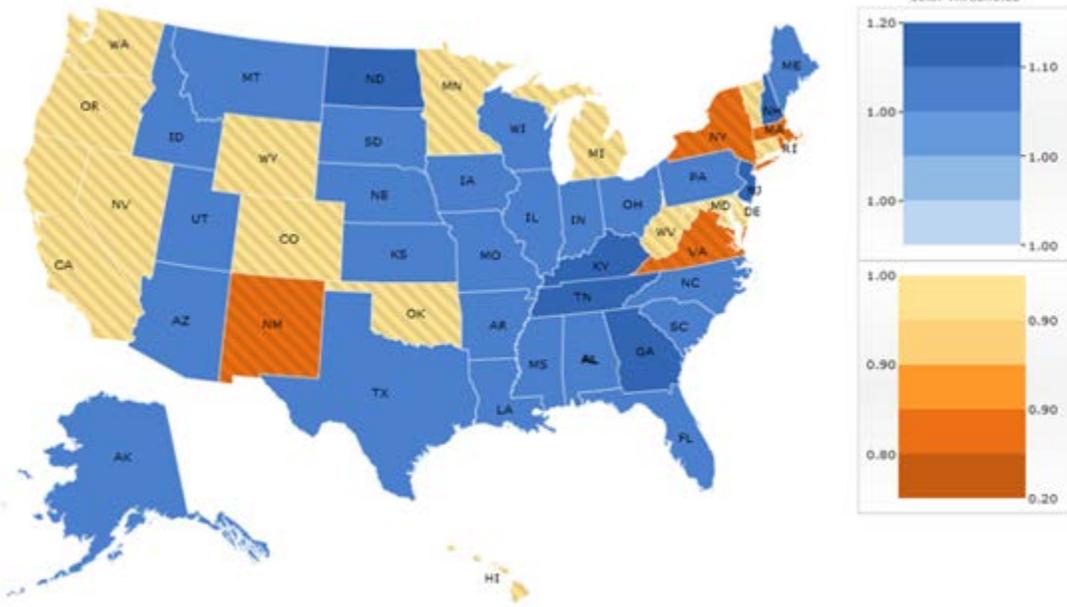


Click on a county to see industry data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)
No data: Negative values:

Maps 13-15 **Trade, Transportation & Utilities**: LQ = 1.06 & Change in Employment = -0.8%

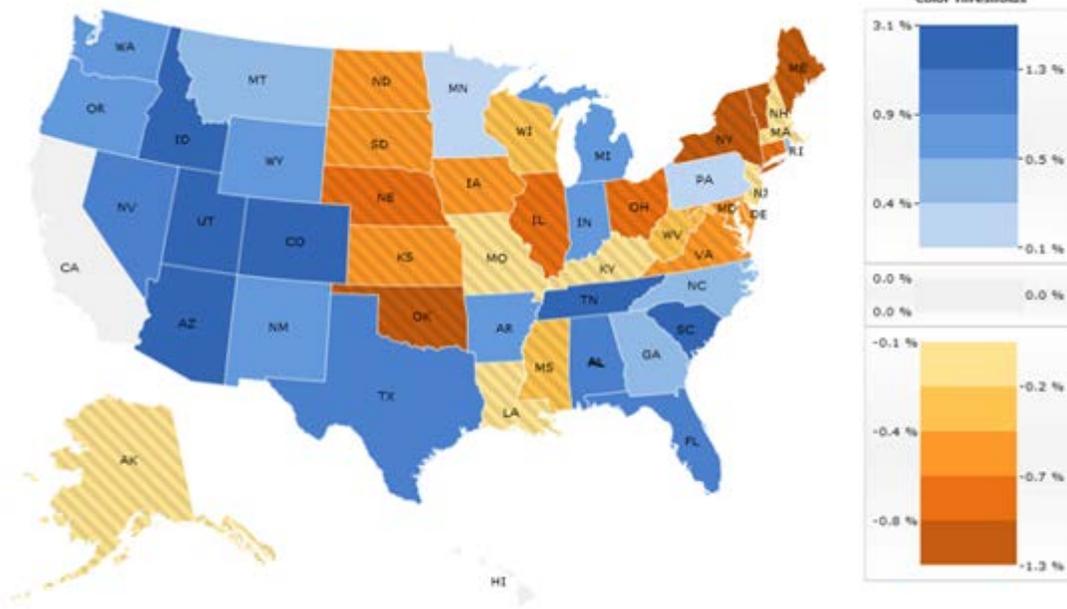
Location quotient, Trade, Transportation, and Utilities , Private Dec 2018 (p)



Click on a state to view county data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)
 No data: Negative values:

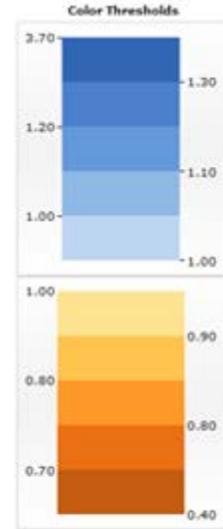
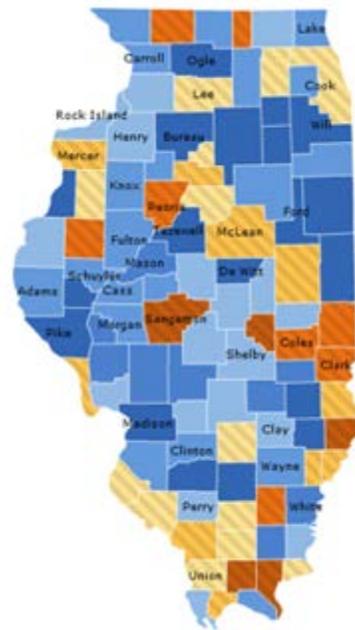
12 month percent change in employment, Trade, Transportation, and Utilities , Private Dec 2017-Dec 2018 (p)



Click on a state to view county data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)
 No data: Negative values:

Location quotient, Trade, Transportation, and Utilities , Private Dec 2018 (p)



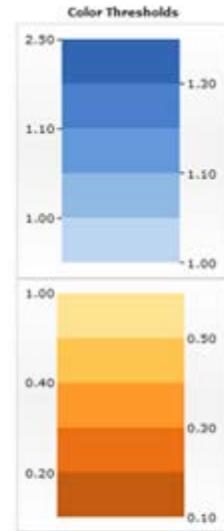
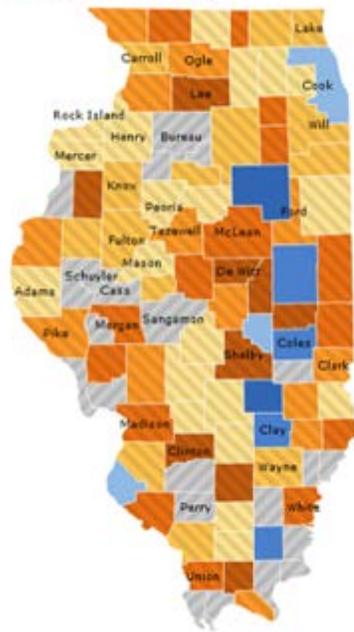
Click on a county to see industry data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

No data: Negative values:

Maps 16-18 **Information:** LQ = 0.82 & Change in Employment = -0.7%

Location quotient, Information, Private Dec 2018 (p)



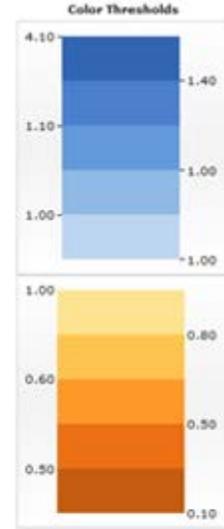
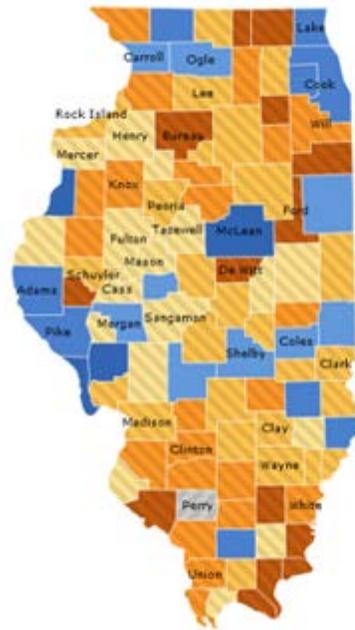
Click on a county to see industry data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

No data: Negative values:

Maps 19-21 **Financial Activities**: LQ = 1.12 & Change in Employment = 0.6%

Location quotient, Financial Activities , Private Dec 2018 (p)



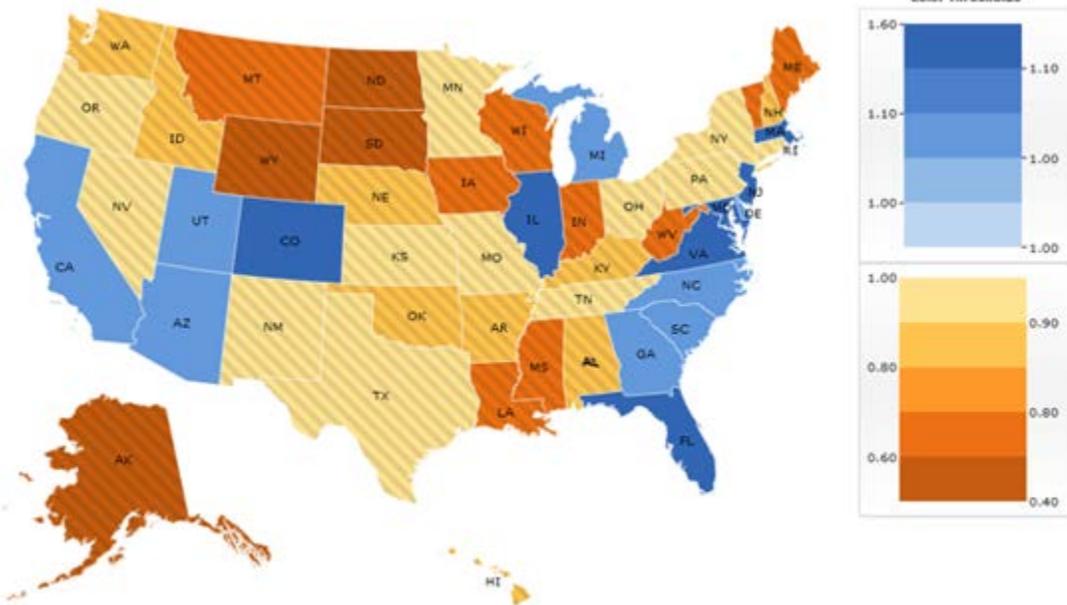
Click on a county to see industry data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

No data: Negative values:

Maps 22-24 **Professional & Business Services**: LQ = 1.11 & Change in Employment = 0.0%

Location quotient, Professional and Business Services , Private Dec 2018 (p)

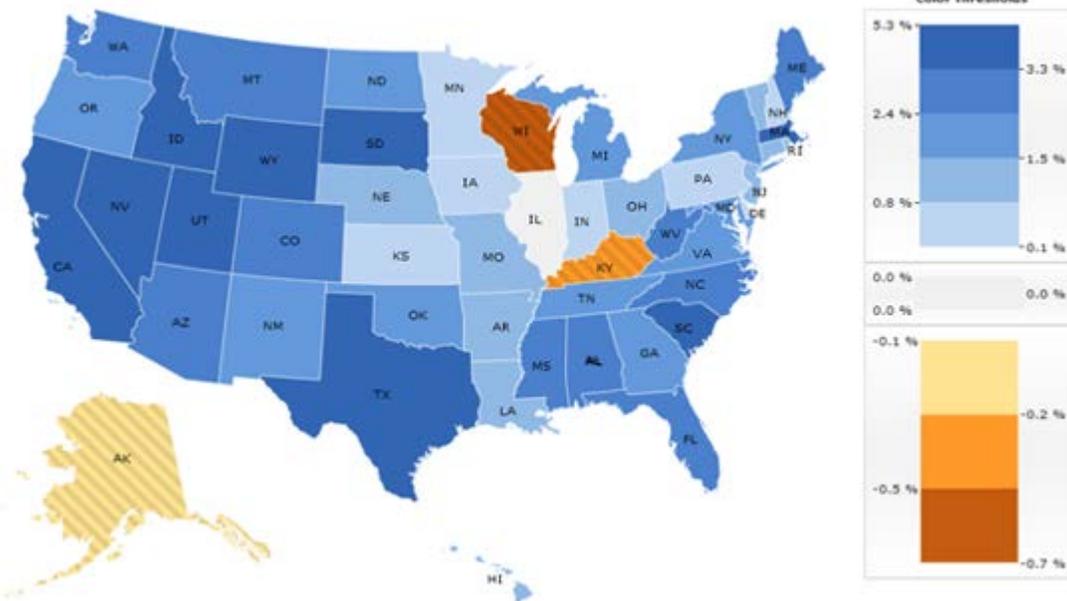


Click on a state to view county data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

No data: Negative values:

12 month percent change in employment, Professional and Business Services , Private Dec 2017-Dec 2018 (p)

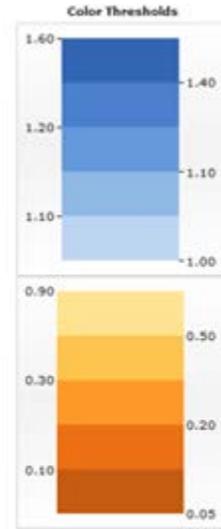
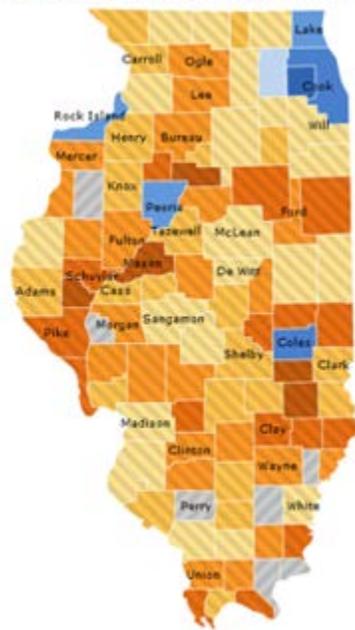


Click on a state to view county data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

No data: Negative values:

Location quotient, Professional and Business Services , Private Dec 2018 (p)

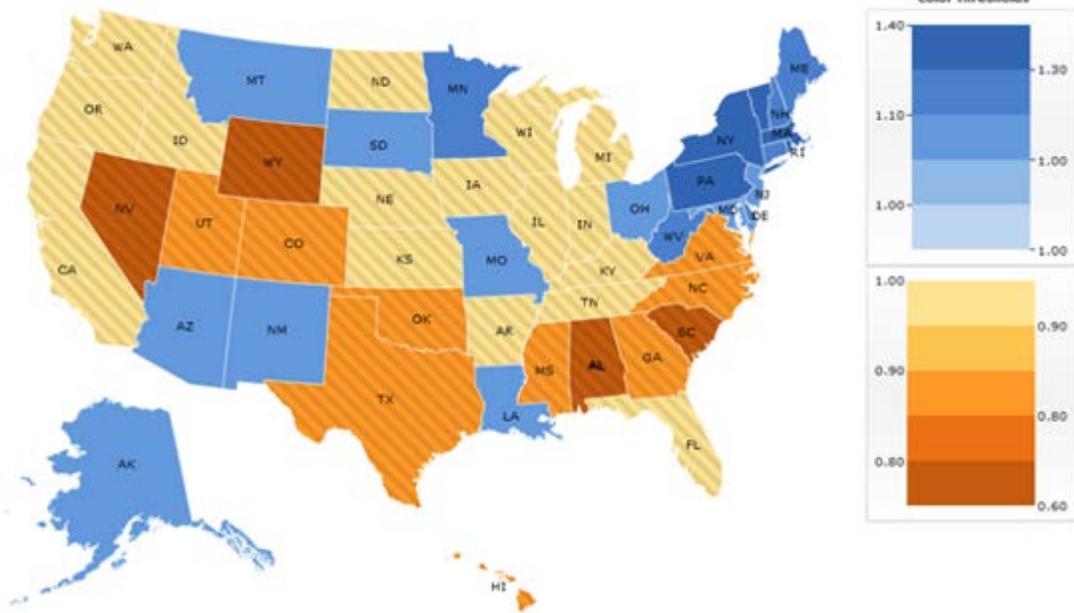


Click on a county to see industry data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)
No data: Negative values:

Maps 25-27 **Education & Health**: LQ = 0.99 & Change in Employment = 1.0%

Location quotient, Education and Health Services , Private Dec 2018 (p)

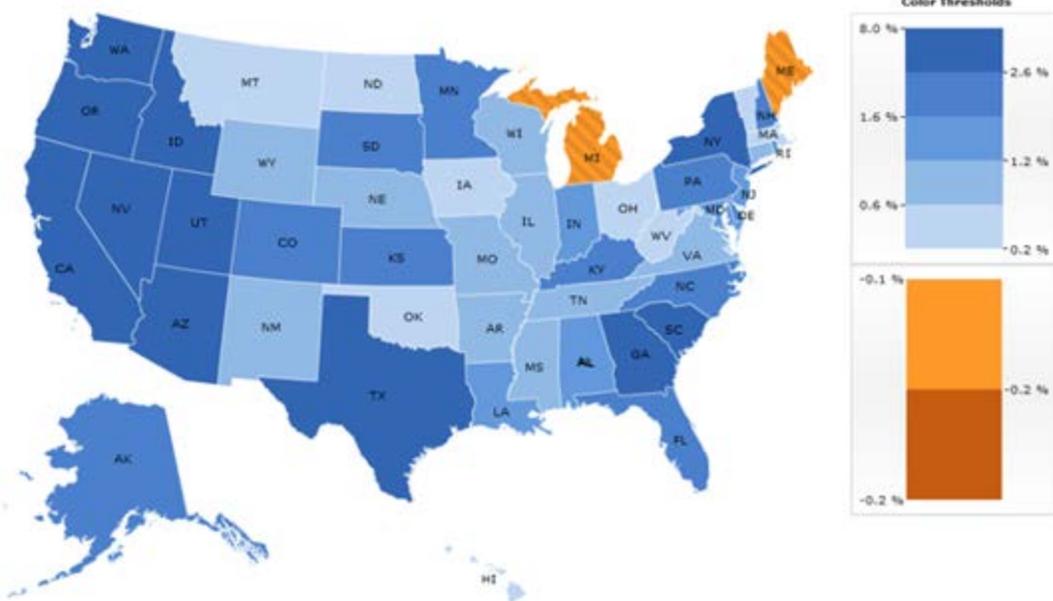


Click on a state to view county data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

No data: Negative values:

12 month percent change in employment, Education and Health Services , Private Dec 2017-Dec 2018 (p)

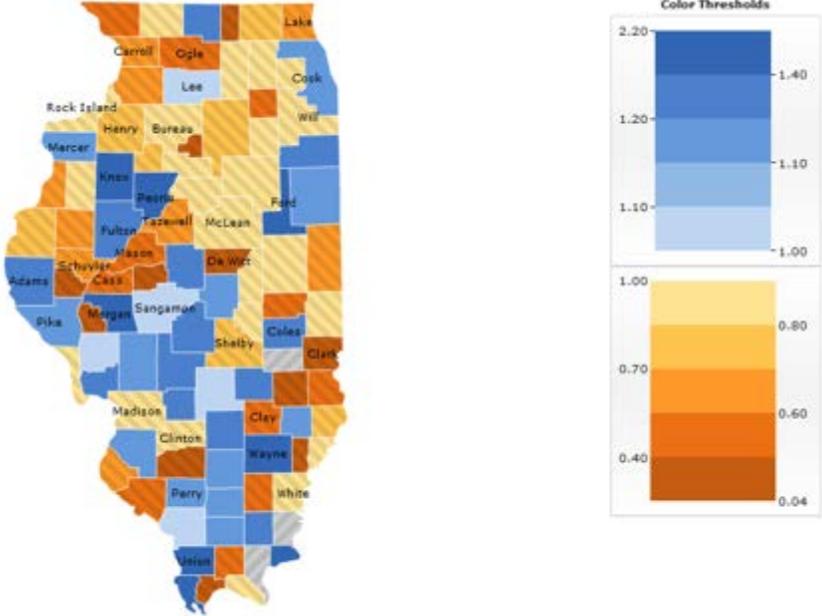


Click on a state to view county data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

No data: Negative values:

Location quotient, Education and Health Services , Private Dec 2018



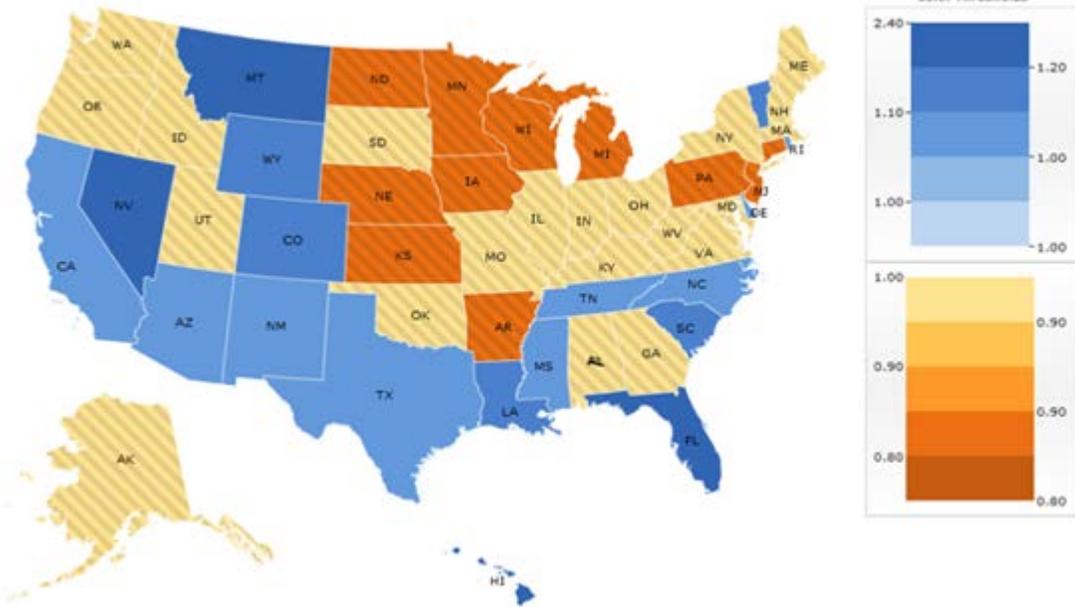
Click on a county to see industry data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

No data: Negative values:

Maps 28-30 **Leisure & Hospitality**: LQ = 0.93 & Change in Employment = 1.5%

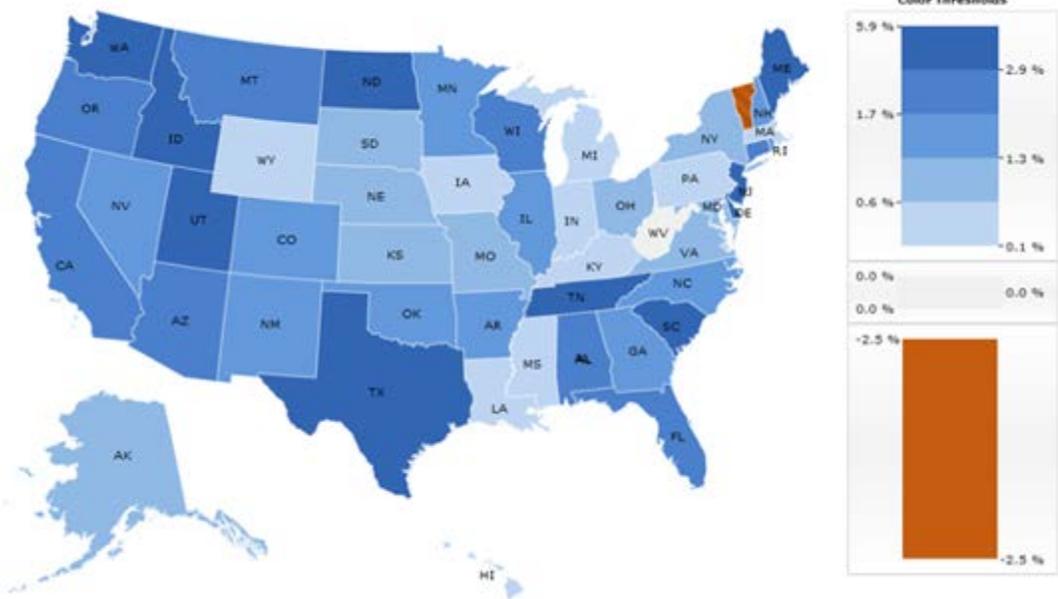
Location quotient, Leisure and Hospitality, Private Dec 2018 (p)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

Click on a state to view county data.

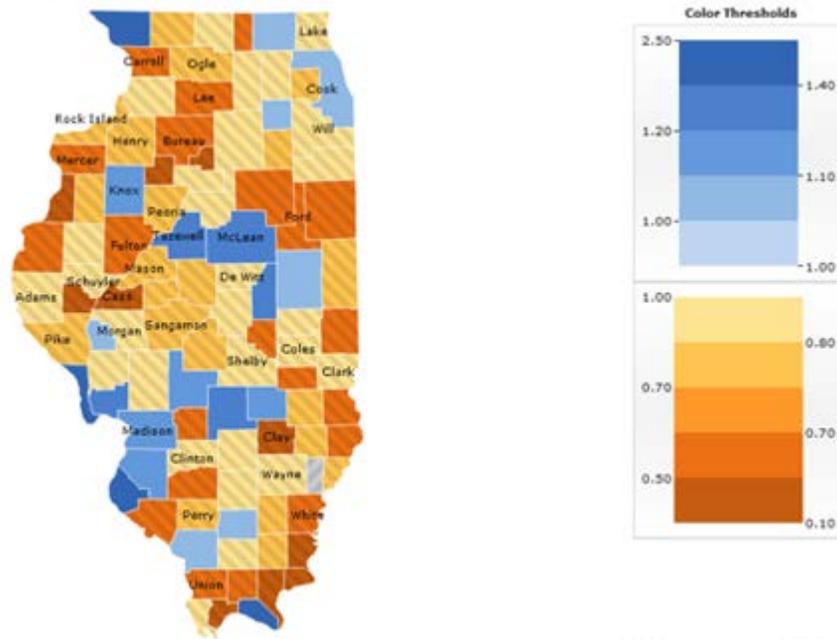
12 month percent change in employment, Leisure and Hospitality, Private Dec 2017-Dec 2018 (p)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

Click on a state to view county data.

Location quotient, Leisure and Hospitality, Private Dec 2018 (p)



Click on a county to see industry data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)
No data: [grey box] Negative values: [dark orange box]

The following table provides a ranking of sectors by LQ and by the Percent Change in Employment depicted on the prior maps.

Table 3: Ranking of Sectors by Location Quotient

Sector	LQ	Percent Change In Employment Dec. 17 - Dec. 18	Sector	LQ	Percent Change In Employment Dec. 17 - Dec. 18
All Industries	1.02	0.3%	All Industries	1.02	0.3%
Sorted by LQ Rank			Sorted by Percent Change Rank		
Manufacturing	1.14	1.4%	Construction	0.75	2.2%
Financial Activities	1.12	0.6%	Leisure & Hospitality	0.93	1.5%
Professional & Business Services	1.11	0.0%	Manufacturing	1.14	1.4%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	1.06	-0.8%	Education & Health	0.99	1.0%
Education & Health	0.99	1.0%	Financial Activities	1.12	0.6%
Leisure & Hospitality	0.93	1.5%	Professional & Business Services	1.11	0.0%
Information	0.82	-0.7%	Natural Resources & Mining	0.34	-0.4%
Construction	0.75	2.2%	Information	0.82	-0.7%
Natural Resources & Mining	0.34	-0.4%	Trade, Transportation & Utilities	1.06	-0.8%

Source: BLS QCEW

Four sectors, Manufacturing, Financial Activities, Professional & Business Services and Trade, Transportation & Utilities have an LQ indicating a comparative advantage for Illinois. Two sectors, Education and Health and Leisure & Hospitality have an LQ greater than 0.90, which indicates they are near the national level. Information and Construction are the next level at 0.82 and 0.75, respectively. The one true outlier is Natural Resources and Mining with an LQ of 0.34.

Note that Construction had a 2.2% increase in employment, a rate nearly double that of the next highest sector. However, when looking at the national level, the percent change in Construction

Employment over this period ranged from -0.5% in Vermont to nearly 24% in West Virginia, with the national average being 4.4%. The Illinois LQ for Construction edged downward throughout 2018.

The analysis of Location Quotients and Change in Employment is merely the first step in identifying priority sectors. The next section of the Unified State Plan covers how industries are categorized as Leading, Emerging or Maturing and how that information is used to help determine priority sectors.

Table 4 shows projected employment demand through 2026 for major occupational sectors throughout Illinois. The largest numbers of new jobs are expected to be created within occupational categories of food preparation and service, transportation and material moving, health care practitioners and technicians, and management occupations. Large numbers of job openings (including replacement jobs) are expected in those occupations, as well as sales and office and administrative occupations. Regardless of overall employment change, significant numbers of job openings are still expected annually, due to replacements of existing workers that will transfer or exit from the labor force.

Table 4: Illinois Employment by Major Occupational Sector

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Title	Base Year Employment	Share of Statewide Base Year Employment	Projection Year Employment	Net Employment Change 2016-2026		Average Annual Job Openings due to			
	2016	2016	2026	Number	Percent	Exits	Transfer	Growth	Total
TOTAL, ALL	6,365,062	100.00%	6,731,462	366,400	5.76%	300,904	404,000	36,640	741,544
Management Occupations	547,740	8.61%	582,860	35,120	6.41%	16,008	27,152	3,512	46,672
Business & Financial Operations Occupations	346,407	5.44%	373,072	26,665	7.70%	10,602	20,907	2,666	34,175
Computer & Mathematical Occupations	181,091	2.85%	203,393	22,302	12.32%	3,327	9,142	2,230	14,699
Architecture & Engineering Occupations	91,441	1.44%	97,570	6,129	6.70%	2,343	4,322	613	7,278
Life, Physical & Social Science Occupations	37,270	0.59%	39,003	1,733	4.65%	1,023	2,365	173	3,561
Community & Social Services Occupations	104,108	1.64%	110,320	6,212	5.97%	4,400	7,108	621	12,129
Legal Occupations	52,787	0.83%	57,683	4,896	9.28%	1,302	1,797	490	3,589
Education, Training & Library Occupations	378,119	5.94%	394,380	16,261	4.30%	16,512	15,977	1,626	34,115
Arts/Design/Entertainment, Sports/Media <i>Occs.</i>	94,568	1.49%	96,968	2,400	2.54%	3,886	5,306	240	9,432
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical <i>Occs.</i>	365,355	5.74%	402,598	37,243	10.19%	10,106	9,857	3,724	23,687
Healthcare Support Occupations	170,884	2.68%	192,395	21,511	12.59%	10,284	9,934	2,151	22,369
Protective Service Occupations	160,641	2.52%	167,551	6,910	4.30%	8,360	9,216	691	18,267
Food Preparation & Serving Occupations	508,254	7.99%	578,497	70,243	13.82%	41,280	51,175	7,024	99,479
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maint. <i>Occs.</i>	195,639	3.07%	206,882	11,243	5.75%	12,263	12,751	1,124	26,138
Personal Care & Service Occupations	206,287	3.24%	224,642	18,355	8.90%	15,971	15,808	1,836	33,615
Sales & Related Occupations	634,689	9.97%	656,358	21,669	3.41%	36,551	48,949	2,167	87,667
Office & Administrative Support Occupations	934,557	14.68%	920,108	-14,449	-1.55%	47,870	56,199	-1,445	102,624
Farming, Fishing & Forestry Occupations	15,492	0.24%	15,560	68	0.44%	574	1,717	7	2,298
Construction & Extraction Occupations	202,329	3.18%	218,070	15,741	7.78%	7,347	13,581	1,574	22,502
Installation, Maintenance & Repair <i>Occs.</i>	215,963	3.39%	228,074	12,111	5.61%	7,816	12,995	1,211	22,022
Production Occupations	429,122	6.74%	429,373	251	0.06%	17,640	30,558	25	48,223
Transportation & Material Moving Occupations	492,319	7.73%	536,105	43,786	8.89%	25,441	37,183	4,379	67,003

Source: IL Department of Employment Security Statewide Long-Term Employment Projections

ii. Emerging Industry Sectors

The report developed in response to the Governor’s Executive Order Number 3 (referenced in the previous section) was very clear regarding the importance and usefulness of cluster- or sector-

based analyses in the planning and implementation of economic and workforce development strategies. As stated in the report:

By focusing resources on specific clusters, the state can more effectively focus on a competitive advantage in emerging industries. Leading companies in high-growth industry clusters act as a magnet for talent, related businesses, robust infrastructure, and innovation. Investing in the foundations of a dynamic economy, such as a well-trained workforce, a favorable regulatory environment, and a coordinated plan can help the state attract companies to specific clusters. Sector partnerships, a workforce development practice based on industry clusters, are being used throughout the U.S. to advance and align education and training inputs and outcomes with industry talent pipeline needs.²

While the priority sectors methodology described in the previous section is a collaborative process to fully implement the report's strategic mandate to implement coordinated workforce development strategies around industry clusters, the initial stages of this process utilize data-informed supply and demand analysis to categorize industries on the basis of their concentration (and thereby their importance) in the state, as well as their projected employment growth characteristics.

In an effort to examine and begin to categorize industry sectors as part of this priority sectors methodology, major industry sectors were categorized according to the following methodology:

- **LEADING** industries are identified as those which are expected to grow during the projection period, and which are important within the state (i.e., have a location quotient greater than 1.0). These industries are found in the upper right-hand quadrant of Figure 1.
- **EMERGING** industries are identified as those that are not strongly represented in the current economy (i.e., have a location quotient that is less than 1.0), but are expected to grow during the projection period. These industries are found in the lower right-hand quadrant of Figure 1.
- **MATURING** industries are identified as those that are important within the state but are not expected to grow during the projection period. These industries are found in the upper left-hand quadrant of Figure 1.

Industries in each of these categories are important to the economy for job growth and availability and are therefore important for the planning of WIOA and partner programs during the period of this Unified State Plan. In summary, leading industries are those that will likely provide the largest number of job openings, due to their combination of size and growth; emerging industries are those that are currently small but are quickly gaining in economic importance and job creation; and maturing industries are those which have slower job growth, but still have a hefty presence in the economy and will continue to create significant job openings, even if only through attrition (e.g., accelerating retirements).

Tables 5, 6 and 7 display the results of categorizing (according to this methodology) the major industries from Table 2. Major industry categories that are not included in one of these categories are now dropped from the analysis.

Table 5: LEADING Major Industry Sectors Statewide

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Title	Base Year Employment 2016	Share of Statewide Base Year Employment 2016	Projected Year Employment 2026	Net Change 2016-2026	Ten-Year Percent Change 2016-2026	Location Quotient 2016
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	6,365,062	100.00%	6,763,811	398,749	6.26%	1.00
Professional and Business Services	931,586	14.64%	1,025,114	93,528	10.04%	1.12
Manufacturing	573,671	9.01%	589,224	15,553	2.71%	1.12
Educational Services, Private and Public	565,016	8.88%	576,335	11,319	2.00%	1.26
Financial Activities	382,656	6.01%	395,060	12,404	3.24%	1.10
Wholesale Trade	301,789	4.74%	332,870	31,081	10.30%	1.26
Transportation and Warehousing	293,783	4.62%	322,519	28,736	9.78%	1.23
Personal and Other Services	268,418	4.22%	271,960	3,542	1.32%	1.11
Utilities	24,306	0.38%	25,324	1,018	4.19%	1.06

Projections Source: IL Department of Employment Security Statewide Long-Term Employment Projections
 LQ Source: https://data.bls.gov/cew/apps/table_maker/v4/table_maker.htm#type=11&year=2016&qtr=4&own=5&area=17000&supp=0

Table 6: EMERGING Major Industry Sectors Statewide

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Title	Base Year Employment 2016	Share of Statewide Base Year Employment 2016	Projected Year Employment 2026	Net Change 2016-2026	Ten-Year Percent Change 2016-2026	Location Quotient 2016
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	6,365,062	100.00%	6,763,811	398,749	6.26%	1.00
Health Care and Social Assistance	789,915	12.41%	867,791	77,876	9.86%	0.96
Retail Trade	617,318	9.70%	634,056	16,738	2.71%	0.94
Leisure and Hospitality	596,754	9.38%	679,927	83,173	13.94%	0.92
Government*	348,065	5.47%	353,646	5,581	1.60%	0.38
Self Employed, Unpaid Family Workers and Others n.e.c.*	271,738	4.27%	272,233	495	0.18%	0.76
Construction	218,274	3.43%	240,128	21,854	10.01%	0.76

Projections Source: IL Department of Employment Security Statewide Long-Term Employment Projections
 LQ Source: https://data.bls.gov/cew/apps/table_maker/v4/table_maker.htm#type=11&year=2016&qtr=4&own=5&area=17000&supp=0

Table 7: MATURING Major Industry Sectors Statewide

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Title	Base Year Employment 2016	Share of Statewide Base Year Employment 2016	Projected Year Employment 2026	Net Change 2016-2026	Ten-Year Percent Change 2016-2026	Location Quotient 2016
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	6,365,062	100.00%	6,763,811	398,749	6.26%	1.00
NONE	-	-	-	-	-	-

Projections Source: IL Department of Employment Security Statewide Long-Term Employment Projections
 LQ Source: https://data.bls.gov/cew/apps/table_maker/v4/table_maker.htm#type=11&year=2016&qtr=4&own=5&area=17000&supp=0

Regional Economic Analysis of Existing and Emerging Sectors

The regional planning process utilizes the same analytic steps to assist regional teams to identify leading, emerging and maturing industry clusters and occupations within each region. This includes the development of crosswalks between the detailed (3-digit) industry clusters and the occupational pathways for each region. Results of the crosswalk pinpoint occupations related to the detailed industry clusters identified statewide as leading, emerging and maturing. These are considered starting points for conversations with employers regarding critical occupations within their industries during the complete regional planning process.

Once again, this process is in line with action agenda laid out in the Executive Order 3 report:

Specialized industry clusters in more rural parts of the state, while important to their local economies, may not be apparent in an analysis of statewide data. As a result, the cluster identification process should occur in each of the State’s Economic Development Regions to determine the economic drivers in each. Targeted regional clusters (groups of similar firms) determine in-demand occupations (groups of similar jobs) in that region. Public sector training funds are guided by in-demand occupations. Ensuring these training investments align with economic development activities will give the highest chance of success for both efforts.³

Table 8 below summarizes the leading, emerging and maturing sectors *preliminarily* identified for each of the statewide Economic Development Regions based on these current and projected employment data, along with a brief comment on each region.

Table 8: Leading, Emerging and Maturing Sectors Identified by Economic Development Region

Region	Leading Sectors	Emerging Sectors	Maturing Sectors	Comments
Central	Health Care, Retail Trade, Manufacturing, Educational Services, Personal & Other Services, Transportation & Warehousing, Agricultural Production, Utilities	Government, Leisure and Hospitality, Professional and Business Services, Financial Activities, Self-Employed Workers, Wholesale Trade, Construction	(None)	Agricultural Production and Educational Services are the most significantly concentrated industries in this region, although neither sector expects high job growth. Health Care & Social Assistance and Leisure and Hospitality are projected to be the greatest sources of job growth.

East Central	Educational Services, Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, Agricultural Production, Transportation & Warehousing	Health Care, Retail Trade, Leisure and Hospitality, Professional and Business Services, Government, Self Employed Workers, Financial Activities, Personal & Other Services, Construction, Utilities	(None)	<p>The concentration of Educational Services in this region is higher than any industry in any region of the state (largely due to the presence of the University of Illinois).</p> <p>Wholesale Trade and Health Care & Social Assistance are expected to create large numbers of jobs in the coming decade.</p>
North Central	Health Care, Educational Services, Financial Activities, Manufacturing, Personal & Other Services, Transportation & Warehousing, Agricultural Production, Utilities	Professional and Business Services, Leisure and Hospitality, Retail Trade, Government, Self Employed Workers, Construction, Wholesale Trade	(None)	<p>Educational Services is highly concentrated in this region, along with Financial Services and Agricultural Production. Manufacturing continues to be a significant employer, although employment growth may lag other sectors.</p>

Northeast	Professional and Business Services, Educational Services, Manufacturing, Financial Activities, Wholesale Trade, Transportation & Warehousing, Personal & Other Services	Health Care, Leisure and Hospitality, Retail Trade, Government, Construction, Utilities, Agricultural Production	(None)	As is the case in many regions of the state, Educational Services is highly concentrated in this region. Financial Activities and Transportation & Warehousing are also highly concentrated here. Professional and Business Services are expected to be the greatest source of job growth (and overall employment) in this region, while also being a highly concentrated industry.
Northern Stateline	Manufacturing, Educational Services, Personal & Other Services, Transportation & Warehousing, Agricultural Production, Utilities	Retail Trade, Professional and Business Services, Leisure and Hospitality, Government, Self Employed Workers, Financial Activities, Construction, Wholesale Trade	(None)	Manufacturing and Utilities are both more highly concentrated in this region than in any other region of the state. However, Transportation & Warehousing is the sector with the highest job creation expectation through 2026.
Northwest	Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Educational Services, Transportation & Warehousing, Agricultural Production, Personal & Other Services, Wholesale Trade, Utilities	Health Care, Professional and Business Services, Leisure and Hospitality, Self Employed Workers, Construction	Natural Resources and Mining	As with the Northern Stateline region, this region features a high concentration of employment in Utilities. Agricultural Production and Educational Services are also highly concentrated. Manufacturing is projected to have the highest share of

				employment of any single sector through 2026.
Southeast	Manufacturing, Health Care, Educational Services, Agricultural Production, Transportation & Warehousing, Utilities	Retail Trade, Leisure and Hospitality, Professional and Business Services, Government, Wholesale Trade, Personal & Other Services, Construction	Natural Resources and Mining	Agricultural Production and Manufacturing are both highly concentrated sectors in this region, along with Educational Services. Biggest job-creating sectors in this region are expected to be Health Care & Social Assistance and Leisure and Hospitality.
Southern	Health Care, Educational Services, Retail Trade, Manufacturing, Agricultural Production, Transportation & Warehousing, Utilities	Leisure and Hospitality, Government, Professional and Business Services, Self Employed Workers, Personal & Other Services, Financial Activities, Construction, Wholesale Trade	Natural Resources and Mining	Educational Services and Agricultural Production are both highly concentrated sectors in this region. Natural Resources and Mining is very highly concentrated in this region, but is not expected to see overall employment growth. Biggest job-creating sectors in this region are expected to be Health Care & Social Assistance and Leisure and Hospitality.

Southwest	Health Care, Retail Trade, Leisure and Hospitality, Educational Services, Transportation & Warehousing, Personal & Other Services, Construction, Agricultural Production, Utilities	Professional and Business Services, Government, Self Employed Workers, Financial Activities, Wholesale Trade	Manufacturing	Aside from Educational Services, Transportation & Warehousing and Utilities are the sectors with the most highly concentrated employment in this region. Transportation & Warehousing is expected to create significant employment growth over the projection period as well.
West Central	Health Care & Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Agricultural Production, Personal & Other Services, Transportation & Warehousing, Utilities	Government, Leisure and Hospitality, Wholesale Trade, Financial Activities, Professional and Business Services, Construction	Retail Trade, Educational Services	Educational Services, Agricultural Production and Utilities are the sectors of greatest employment concentration in this region, although Educational Services is expected to contract over the course of the projection period. Health Care & Social Assistance is the sector with the highest expected growth rate.

As mentioned in the analysis of existing demand industries, the selection of priority sectors in response to EO3 considered if the data indicated a sector was Leading, Maturing or Emerging. In addition, we looked at the status of all sectors in each of our ten regions. Giving greater weight to Leading and Emerging sectors, sectors with a larger geographic spread were rated higher than those less widespread across the state.

The following table displays the leading and emerging statewide sectors ranked following the application of geographic weighting.

Table 9: Sector Ranking with Regional Weighting

RANKED WITH REGIONAL WEIGHTING		Weight			TOTAL
		3	2	1	
Sector / Industry	State Status	Leading Regions	Emerging Regions	Maturing Regions	
Manufacturing	Leading	27	0	1	28
Educational Services, Private and Public	Leading	27	0	1	28
Utilities	Leading	24	4	0	28
Transportation and Warehousing	Leading	27	0	0	27
Health Care and Social Assistance	Emerging	18	6	0	24
Wholesale Trade	Leading	9	14	0	23
Professional and Business Services	Leading	3	18	0	21
Leisure and Hospitality	Emerging	3	18	0	21
Construction	Emerging	3	18	0	21
Financial Activities	Leading	6	12	0	18

iii. Employers’ Employment Needs

An effective workforce system must at minimum ensure that a pool of appropriately skilled workers is available when and where businesses need them. The workforce and education systems must be nimble and ready to respond to the changing skills and abilities that workers need to succeed in industries and occupations vital to the state and in each region. Ensuring workforce and education systems are in tune with business needs was a major focus of Governor Pritzker’s Executive Order 3 report. As that report points out, connecting employers and job seekers and giving employers access to the skilled workforce they need are key areas of concern for Illinois’ workforce development system. Increasing employer awareness of available workforce development resources will be important to retaining existing jobs and attracting new business and industry.

The workforce system in Illinois has been proactive in seeking input from business leaders with a variety of approaches. For example:

- In October 2018, a statewide summit, “Work, Learn, Grow” was held with private sector leaders from manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, transportation, distribution & logistics and financial services and leaders in education and workforce development to highlight successes and explore options for expanding the use of work-based learning.
- In November 2018 and January 2019, the State worked with the Technology and Manufacturing Association and the Society of Human Resources Management to host listening sessions with manufacturing and healthcare leaders. These sessions were designed to solicit honest feedback about private sector employment needs, awareness of options to improve access to skilled

workers, satisfaction with responsiveness of the workforce system and their interest in forming regional sector partnerships to more effectively engage with the system and each other.

- The manufacturing event directly led to the industry association expanding its partnership with local workforce areas, supported by Title I statewide activities funding, to recruit and train skilled workers for its members.
- At the healthcare event employers identified their common difficulty in filling medical technician positions, which are becoming more common in the industry. These positions were not showing up in standard occupational data analyses because their numbers had not yet reached enough mass to register. The event also fostered interest among employers to band together to address talent pipeline issues together. Since the event, conversations continue among the human resources staff at the various employers that point to the eventual formation of a sector partnership.
- In 2019, researchers affiliated with the interagency Integrated Business Services Workgroup (discussed later in this section) spoke with and surveyed Illinois businesses across sectors and across states in order to better understand what employers are seeking from the workforce development system, and how we can better connect employers to that system. The findings of this project, called “Striking the Balance: Addressing the Needs of Illinois’ Employers and Most Vulnerable Jobseekers,” will provide new insight into why and how employers do -- and do not -- utilize the Illinois workforce development system to solve their difficult talent recruitment and retention problems.

Business leaders across all sectors and industries have taken every opportunity to emphasize the critical importance of essential employability skills. Many business leaders contend workers must have strong employability skills alongside strong technical skills. The workforce system is adapting to this by supporting awareness of the importance of employability skills to educators, students, workforce career services staff and program participants, and encouraging employability skills training embedded into classroom and work-based training models.

Technical skill development in Illinois continues the trend of emphasizing industry-recognized credentials and the use of work-based learning models where businesses have the greatest influence in setting the curricula to match their employment needs. Illinois is currently using DOL grants to expand apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships.

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) approved new outcomes related to WIOA Policy 8.4 - Training Expenditure Requirement. One of the outcomes of this policy that we expect to be evaluated is that the results of local workforce innovation areas, expending a minimum of 50% of their formula WIOA funds on direct training activities, are better positioned to meet the needs of employers with properly trained job applicants.

Looking Ahead

As stated previously, Governor Pritzker’s Action Agenda for Executive Order 3 is driving the state’s response to economic growth, job creation, and workforce development. Within the 2020 Unified State Plan we discuss the innovative strategies that we will develop that prepare both workers and employers

for changes in both the economic and workforce arenas. We are charged with looking ahead to revitalize economic growth and being prepared to meet real-time shifts in market demand.

In the long run, Illinois' workforce must evolve in step with the job market. Advances in technology continue to render some skills less valuable as new skills come into higher demand. This is not a new concept. It began in earnest with the Industrial Revolution and has done nothing but accelerate since then.

New breakthroughs in technology become embedded into the economy rapidly. Artificial Intelligence is rapidly entering into mainstream applications. For example, the first self-parking car was introduced in the United States in 2006. There are now over a half-dozen manufacturers offering this technology on more than a dozen models that include mainstream brands like Ford, Chrysler and Jeep. Several mainstream models now offer driver assist options to stay in your lane, and automatically reduce speed to avoid an accident. Nearly autonomous cars are currently being tested on public highways. Mass retailer Amazon continues efforts to implement package delivery via aerial drones. As these technologies are applied to delivery vehicles and systems the transportation, wholesale and retail sectors will likely see dramatic changes in workforce needs.

Some worry that demand for mid-skill jobs will lessen as jobs polarize toward the ends of the skill spectrum. For example, clerical and inventory control jobs historically done by humans are increasingly being taken over by automated systems. On the other hand, demand for both high-skilled and low-skilled labor has been more constant.

While the trend toward more automation continues, an August 2019 article from the Illinois-based Technology & Manufacturing Association notes "... the United States' manufacturing industry isn't leading the way in embracing robotics." Further, the report quantifies this assertion, "Countries that have turned to robots most range from South Korea with over 600 robots per 10,000 employees, to Germany and Japan's 300, and the United States' 180 per 10,000 employees. One of the most common reasons US manufacturers say they don't use robots is they lack employees with the skills to manage them."⁴ This example highlights the need to use a variety of talent development strategies to provide enough skilled workers to meet the initial demand and be ready for subsequent waves of increasing demand.

The report also highlights the experience of one member business that recently installed automatic welding equipment. Initial employee skepticism and concern over being replaced was reduced as the company was able to take on more work. The company now has over a half-dozen openings to fill, due to the increased volume of work with the workers focusing attention on the work humans do better than robots.

More and more workers are transitioning to the so-called "Gig Economy," a workforce defined by short-term engagements, temporary contract work, and independent contracting. Advances in information and communication technologies are largely driving this shift, as more and more jobs can be performed at any time in any place. The long-term implications of this shift are not certain, but it is possible effective labor-exchange services will become more valuable as a means to connect businesses with skilled workers.

Illinois will continue to promote the use of Sector Strategies to create regional sector-based public-private partnerships to help address common concerns and take advantage of common opportunities for businesses. In particular, we will continue to promote the US Chamber of Commerce Talent Pipeline Management initiative (TPM), which is now active in over 25 states. TPM is a framework for similar businesses to better understand their talent needs and work collectively in a region to improve the talent pipeline, partially through better communication of their needs to the workforce and education systems.

We plan to improve local capacity for the integration of business services across core partners. Many businesses are frustrated with the myriad workforce and education organizations and institutions working in silos⁵. Lack of coordination on business engagement is a very common business complaint. The IWIB's new service integration policy recognizes that integrating business services for the employer customer is as important as integrating services for the job seeker client. In the first full year of implementing the service integration policy, the need to strengthen the coordination and seamlessness of employer services was called out as one of 15 specific integration goals all local workforce areas need to discuss. Workforce areas that identify business service integration as a top priority will develop and implement an action plan to improve employer customer satisfaction in this regard. Creating a regional sector partnership is one approach available to businesses to create a streamlined process to funnel information between businesses and public organizations. However, workforce and education partners must do better at communicating, coordinating and eventually integrating outreach and service delivery to businesses.

A Statewide Activities pilot project for "Business U" training to improve business engagement efforts for regional and local core partner staff in the Northeastern EDR is being planned as of this writing. An evaluation will be conducted on the effectiveness of this training and, if deemed appropriate, additional funds could be made available for capacity building in other regions.

An improved understanding of business needs is a vital first step to building a better talent pipeline. However, just as important is the willingness of state and local workforce system leaders to actually adapt and change how we operate in light of an improved understanding of employers' needs. We described earlier the need to be nimble and responsive to business needs. Going forward, system leaders and staff must remain committed to continuous improvement in this area to help create long-term public-private partnerships, deeper and sustained business engagement, improved outcomes for program participants, and a workforce with the skills needed by employers.⁶

Regional Economic Analysis for Employment Needs

In addition to an analysis of leading, emerging and maturing industries, the diverse Illinois economy requires an accompanying analysis in each of our ten economic development regions. The core partners provided the latest U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data to each of Illinois' regional planning teams, who used these data as a key part of their assessment of business needs in their regional economies. Planning teams were encouraged to augment the BLS data with their own primary data sources, such as business interviews and surveys, discussions with business, industries, associations, and staffing agencies.

Regional plans highlighted the need to understand the challenges and opportunities in the private sector. Important to understanding these challenges is an awareness of the specific knowledge, skills and

abilities in demand in each region. The local workforce boards recognized the importance of considering employers’ employment needs as the foundation for prioritizing workforce system efforts. The following is a summary of the fundamental activities that are identified in Illinois’ ten regional plans that support the identification of employer needs:

Be aware of regional business needs for skilled workers and other issues impacting their competitive position	Ensure basic employability skills awareness and training are provided to participants that need to improve those skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the workforce impact of national, state and regional demographic trends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively to stay in touch with business needs through coordinated strategies that encourage companies to participate in developing talent pipeline solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the effectiveness of regional talent pipelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be willing to share information that will improve companies’ access to skilled workers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of current and anticipated levels of demand for specific skills and how they are related to regional industries and occupations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how their policies and program delivery strategies impact overall efforts to improve regional talent pipelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the level of oversupply or undersupply of high-skilled, medium-skilled and low-skilled workers and the root causes of shortages and surpluses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that talent pipelines incorporate career pathways concepts

Building an Aligned Career Pathways System in Illinois

Over the past decade, the State of Illinois has embraced an approach of career pathways envisioning that Illinois residents will be enabled to progressively build toward college and career success through aligned education, training, and employment opportunities over their lifetime. Along with uniting around regional cluster strategies discussed earlier, Gov. Pritzker’s Action Agenda for EO 3 also articulates a vision to “Prepare Illinois workers for a career, not just their next job.” To this end the order identifies strategies to prepare workers for high-demand careers by developing core academic, technical and employability skills throughout their lifetimes.

Both the public and private sectors are conducting a broad number of efforts pertaining to education, workforce development, and economic development through a lens of career pathways. The development of a college and career pathway system is fully described under the “Partner Engagement with other Education and Training Providers” section of this plan. These strategic initiatives are designed to increase the knowledge, skills and abilities of Illinois citizens so that they may obtain the portable, stackable credentials and licenses that businesses require.

These initiatives have been tied to a number of aligned approaches, including Illinois Pathways, the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act, Illinois’ participation in the National Governors Association Work-Based Learning Policy Academy, scaling of apprenticeship models, and the State’s plans for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Career and Technical Education (Perkins V). Built on longstanding strengths in Illinois, particularly in CTE Programs of Study, this broad pathways

work addresses two goals: first, to increase the number of Illinoisans who attain a postsecondary credential and are prepared for employment in high-demand, high-wage, and high-skill occupations; and second, to spur state and regional economic development by developing a homegrown talent pipeline for areas of workforce need.

Since 2016, the implementation of the PWR Act has utilized deep employer engagement to identify the specific essential employability competencies, as well as technical competencies needed in the State of Illinois. In consultation with state agencies and key industry experts including hiring professionals, education and training professionals, and industry associations, industry-based steering committees were formed to identify and propose technical and professional competencies in six sectors that have since been adopted by the State’s relevant education and training agencies. The first iteration of this document included four industry areas selected due to their alignment with state economic development priorities: Health Sciences and Technology (HST), Information Technology (IT), Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades (METT), and Finance and Business Services (FBS). Two additional areas (Arts and Communication – A&C, Human and Public Services – HPS – particularly the Education Pathway) were mapped, as well as entrepreneurial competencies. These Technical and Employability Competencies serve as quality indicators of an individual’s readiness to enter an industry or to pursue further education. Competency statements apply to current industry needs, contain both employability skills and technical skills, and leave opportunity for specialized training and career advancement. State agencies will be aligning the essential employability skills competencies developed under the PWR Act with the Essential Employability Skills Framework – a framework developed in 2017 through a Title II Adult Education state-level workgroup that included private-sector employers. This framework was developed in 2017 to address employers’ expressed concerns regarding the lack of non-technical skills in new hires and existing employees.

Career pathways are defined in Illinois as “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.” Career pathways 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. In 2018, Illinois’ education and training agencies adopted the Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary, which documented the unified State definition for Career Pathways, as well as definitions for college and career pathway program and system elements. These definitions were thoroughly reviewed by representatives of key State entities and committees pertaining to the broader education and workforce systems in Illinois, including:

State Agencies

- Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)

- Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE)
- Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)
- Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)
- Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)
- Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO)

State Committees & Entities

- Illinois P-20 Council Data, Accountability, & Assessment (DAA) Committee
- Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeships & Pathways (WRAP) Committee of the Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth
- Illinois P-20 Council College & Career Readiness (CCR) Committee Illinois
- Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) Apprenticeship Committee
- Governor’s Office Education Team

Illinois continues to prioritize college and career pathways as a cohesive framework for linking education and training to real-world applications, in ways that both engage employers deeply and meet their talent needs. At each level, college and career pathways system elements must incorporate deep employer engagement, feedback and participation to ensure the system functions well. An example of this is outlined in the work-based learning continuum outlined in the Career Pathways Dictionary, which shows the increasing levels of employer engagement as individuals progress to more involved types of work-based learning, such as apprenticeships.

The implementation of college and career pathways is rapidly expanding throughout the Illinois P-20 education and workforce systems. For example, a network of over 100 high schools in more than 70 school districts across the state are implementing College & Career Pathway Endorsement systems aligned to the PWR Act. This network provides a foundation for future scaling through continued alignment of funding, policy and support at the State level.

Other Current Initiatives

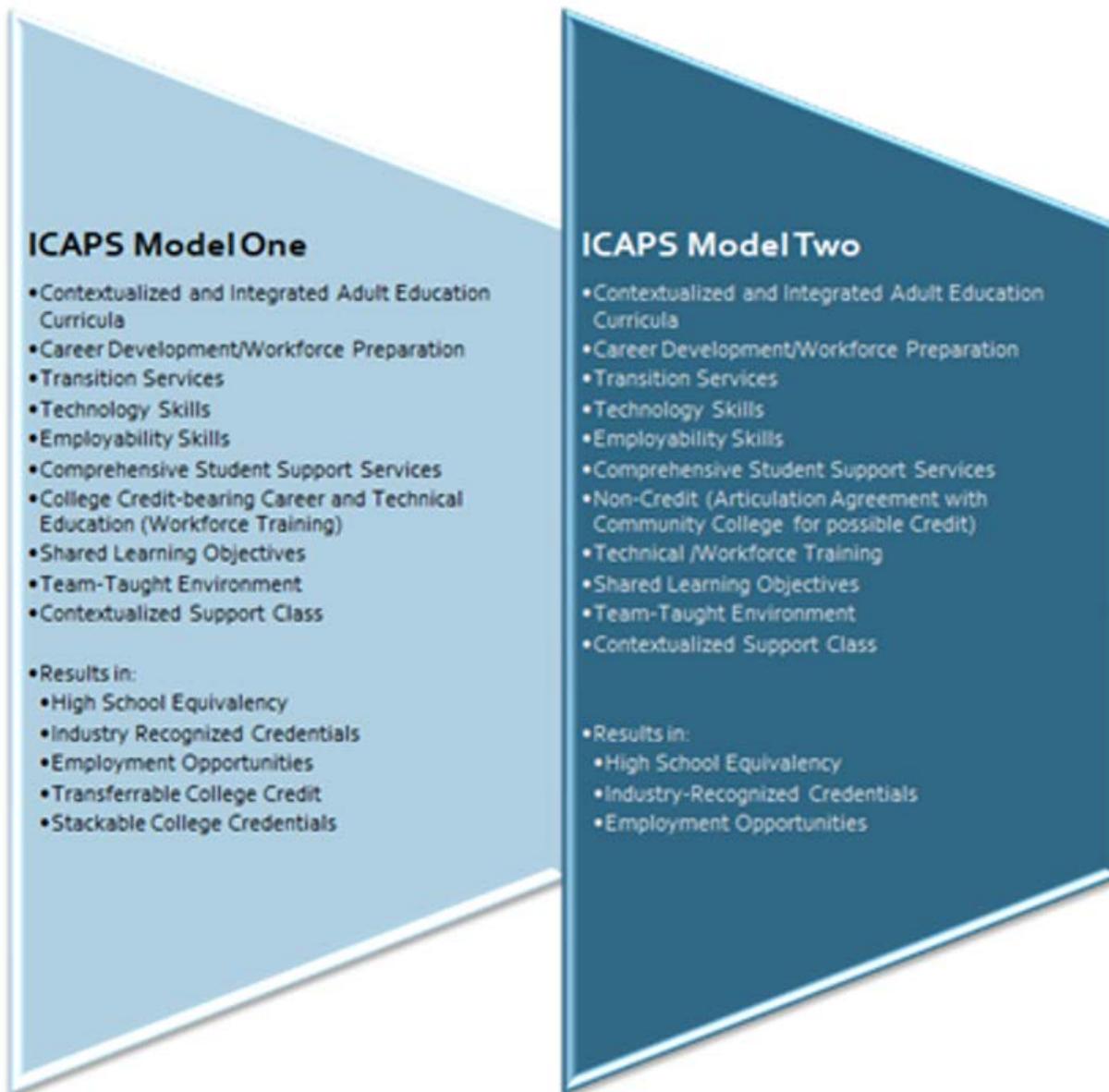
Additionally, these current initiatives are designed to support the workforce and education system to address employers’ needs:

- Integrated Business Services Workgroup – An ongoing project of the WIOA core partners, this workgroup has been active for over two years. With participation from several IWIB members, as well as representatives from all four of the core partners, the Integrated Business Services Workgroup began by developing a “State Framework for Integrated Business Services.” This framework laid out pre-requisites, foundational elements and structural components for a regional approach to integrating business services functions for the core partners.

Since the release of that framework in early 2018, this workgroup has sought to assist implementation of the framework regionally and in Local Workforce Investment Areas. Through activities designed to

assist communication between partners at these levels, activities to assist professional development surrounding this issue, and coordination with related groups and activities, the workgroup has brought particular attention to this vital aspect of local and regional service integration.

- Integrated Education and Training (IET) – Through a partnership between Title II Adult Education and Literacy and Postsecondary Perkins CTE, a basic skill and training model was developed called the Integrated Career and Academic Placement System (ICAPS), which includes stackable and industry recognized credentials. IET aims to provide an integrated pathway of career and technical education (CTE) or non-credit workforce training, inclusive of credential and/or certificate opportunities for Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) students that lack basic skills. Students work to complete their high school equivalency and are concurrently in credit CTE or non-credit training courses through an integrated instructional model — supplemented by support courses, comprehensive student supportive services, and augmented by team teaching that includes CTE faculty and basic skills instructors. The model provides career pathway opportunities for students while enabling their transition into additional postsecondary education or employment. In SFY2020, ICCB supported a joint collaboration between CTE and Adult Education through the braiding of federal Perkins V Leadership and federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Leadership funding to support the development, implementation, scale and evaluation of IET programs. The ICCB aims to support the growth of quality IET opportunities across the state.



- Essential Employability Skills – Through Title II Adult Education, a state-level workgroup that includes private-sector employers was formed to create “The Essential Employability Skills Framework.” This framework was developed in 2017 to address employers’ expressed concerns regarding the lack of non-technical skills in new hires and existing employees and is currently being utilized in the state by employers and community colleges. This framework and self-assessment have been incorporated into the State’s Perkins Plan. Recipients of Perkins funding will be required to incorporate employability skills into their CTE curriculum.

The framework describes and provides detailed examples of the four core elements identified by the state-level working group, which included employers: personal ethics; work ethic; teamwork; and communication. An innovative feature of the Essential Employability Skills Framework is the self-

assessment designed to address exposure to employability skills in classrooms and work-based learning activities and to provide an opportunity to reflect on how instruction is aligned with the framework's definition of essential employability skills.

The Illinois Department of Commerce funded a project with the Greater Oak Brook Chamber of Commerce to promote student awareness of key essential skills by bringing young professionals into schools as mentors and coaches for business-based team challenges. This project is mentioned in other sections of the plan as it also involves business engagement and capacity building.

- Advisory Committee Guidebook - In 2018, this guidebook was developed by the Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support in coordination with the Illinois Community College Board's CTE Team to provide guidance for CTE programs as they work to improve their advisory committees. CTE programs supported by Perkins funding are required to have active advisory committees, consisting of area employers to inform program development, revision, and evaluation. At minimum, advisory committees are required to meet on an annual basis.

Occupational Profiles

Occupational Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Profiles are available through the Illinois Career Information System (CIS). Two sample occupational profiles that were downloaded from <https://portal.ilcis.intocareers.org/> are shown below:

Automobile Mechanics – At a Glance

Automobile mechanics inspect, maintain, and repair cars and light trucks.

Wages: Automobile Mechanics earn \$42,971 per year

Employment: Very large occupation

10 Year Growth: Average growth

Annual Openings: Very High

Preparation: An automobile mechanic typically needs to:

- have a high school diploma or equivalent
- complete a formal training program
- complete short-term, on-the-job training

Credentials:

- Automotive Service Excellence (ASE)
- National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI)
- AAS / AS Degree

Working Conditions: In a typical work setting, automobile mechanics:

- Are responsible for the safety of customers and coworkers.

- Are often exposed to hazardous situations, conditions, and equipment that result in cuts, bruises, or minor burns.
- Must be sure that all details are done, and their work is exact. Errors could cause serious injury to themselves or other workers.
- Usually work a standard 40-hour week.

Employment and Outlook: In Illinois, 28,460 automobile mechanics work in this very large occupation.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Employment</u>	<u>10 Yr Growth</u>	<u>Ann. Openings</u>
Illinois	28,460 Very large	5.8% Average	927 Very High

Knowledge: Automobile mechanics need knowledge in the following areas:

- Mechanical: The design, use, and repair of machines and tools.
- Customer and Personal Service: Providing special services to customers based on their needs.
- Computers and Electronics: Computer hardware and software.
- English Language: The meaning and use of the English language.
- Engineering and Technology: How to use computers and rules of engineering to design and produce goods and services.

Skills and Abilities: Automobile mechanics need to:

Communicate

- Understand spoken information.
- Listen to others and ask questions.
- Speak clearly so listeners can understand.
- Understand written information.

Reason and Problem Solve

- Use reasoning to discover answers to problems.
- Combine several pieces of information and draw conclusions.
- Notice when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong.
- Analyze ideas and use logic to determine their strengths and weaknesses.

Manage Oneself, People, Time, and Things

- Manage the time of self and others.

Work with Things

- Repair machines or systems.
- Determine the causes of technical problems and find solutions for them.
- Watch gauges, dials, and output to make sure a machine is working properly.
- Operate and control equipment.

Perceive and Visualize

- Imagine how something will look if it is moved around or its parts are rearranged.
- Identify a pattern (a figure, object, word, or sound) that is hidden in distracting material.
- Quickly and accurately compare letters, numbers, objects, pictures, or patterns.

Registered Nurses – At a Glance

Registered nurses care for patients who are ill or injured.

Wages: Earn \$72,251 per year

Employment: Very large occupation

10 Year Growth: Faster than average

Annual Openings: Very High

Preparation: A registered nurse typically needs to:

- have a high school diploma or equivalent
- graduate from a nursing program
- complete supervised clinical work experience
- have a license

Working Conditions: In a typical work setting, registered nurses:

- Have a high level of social contact. They work closely with patients.
- Are exposed to diseases or infections on a daily basis. Always wear masks or rubber gloves to protect themselves and their patients from disease.
- Must be very exact in their work. Errors could seriously endanger the health and safety of patients.
- Generally have a set schedule each week.

Employment and Outlook: In Illinois, 116,375 registered nurses work in this very large occupation.

Location Employment 10 Yr Growth Ann. Openings

Illinois 116,375 Very large 10.5% Fast 3,967 Very High

Knowledge: Registered nurses need knowledge in the following areas:

- Medicine and Dentistry: Injuries and illnesses and plans for treatment.
- Customer and Personal Service: Providing special services to customers based on their needs.
- Psychology: People, their actions, and mental processes and how to treat problems.
- English Language: The meaning and use of the English language.
- Therapy and Counseling: The mental or physical problems and methods for treatment.
- Education and Training: The methods of teaching and learning.
- Mathematics: The rules and uses of numbers.
- Biology: Cells, plants, and animals and how they function.
- Sociology and Anthropology: Where people come from and how they behave.
- Computers and Electronics: Computer hardware and software.

Skills and Abilities: Registered nurses need to:

Communicate

- Speak clearly so listeners can understand.
- Understand spoken information.
- Listen to others and ask questions.
- Understand written information.

Reason and Problem Solve

- Notice when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong.
- Use reasoning to discover answers to problems.
- Combine several pieces of information and draw conclusions.
- Analyze ideas and use logic to determine their strengths and weaknesses.

Manage Oneself, People, Time, and Things

- Check how well one is learning or doing something.
- Manage the time of self and others.
- Go back and forth between two or more activities or sources of information without becoming confused.

Work with People

- Be aware of others’ reactions and understand the possible causes.
- Look for ways to help people.
- Change behavior in relation to others’ actions.
- Teach others how to do something.

Perceive and Visualize

- Identify a pattern (a figure, object, word, or sound) that is hidden in distracting material.
- Quickly and accurately compare letters, numbers, objects, pictures, or patterns.

¹Note that the LQs used in the development of Table 2 are derived from the 2016 BLS LQ determinations, in order to be consistent with industry projection timeframes. LQs used in the development of the maps shown below utilize 2018 BLS LQ determinations in order to be consistent with the data set used for that purpose.

²[*An Action Agenda for Workforce Development and Job Creation*](#), p. 8.

³[*An Action Agenda for Workforce Development and Job Creation*](#), p. 7-8.

⁴This note closely coincides with comments made in response to Question #9 of the Unified State Plan Business Community Survey.

⁵This sentiment is reflected in comments made in response to Question #13 of the Unified State Plan Business Community Survey.

⁶A more detailed discussion on TPM and Integrated Business Services may be found in the “Implementation of State Strategies” section of this plan.

B. Workforce Analysis

Illinois’ population in the 25-54 age group declined by almost 240,000 (-1.9%) between 2011 and 2018, according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates. Much smaller declines occurred in the 15-19 year-old population and the 20-24 year-old age group as well. During that same period, the population in the 55-64 age group increased by over 214,000 (+1.7%). As the overall population gets older, the available labor force in Illinois will likely continue to decline.

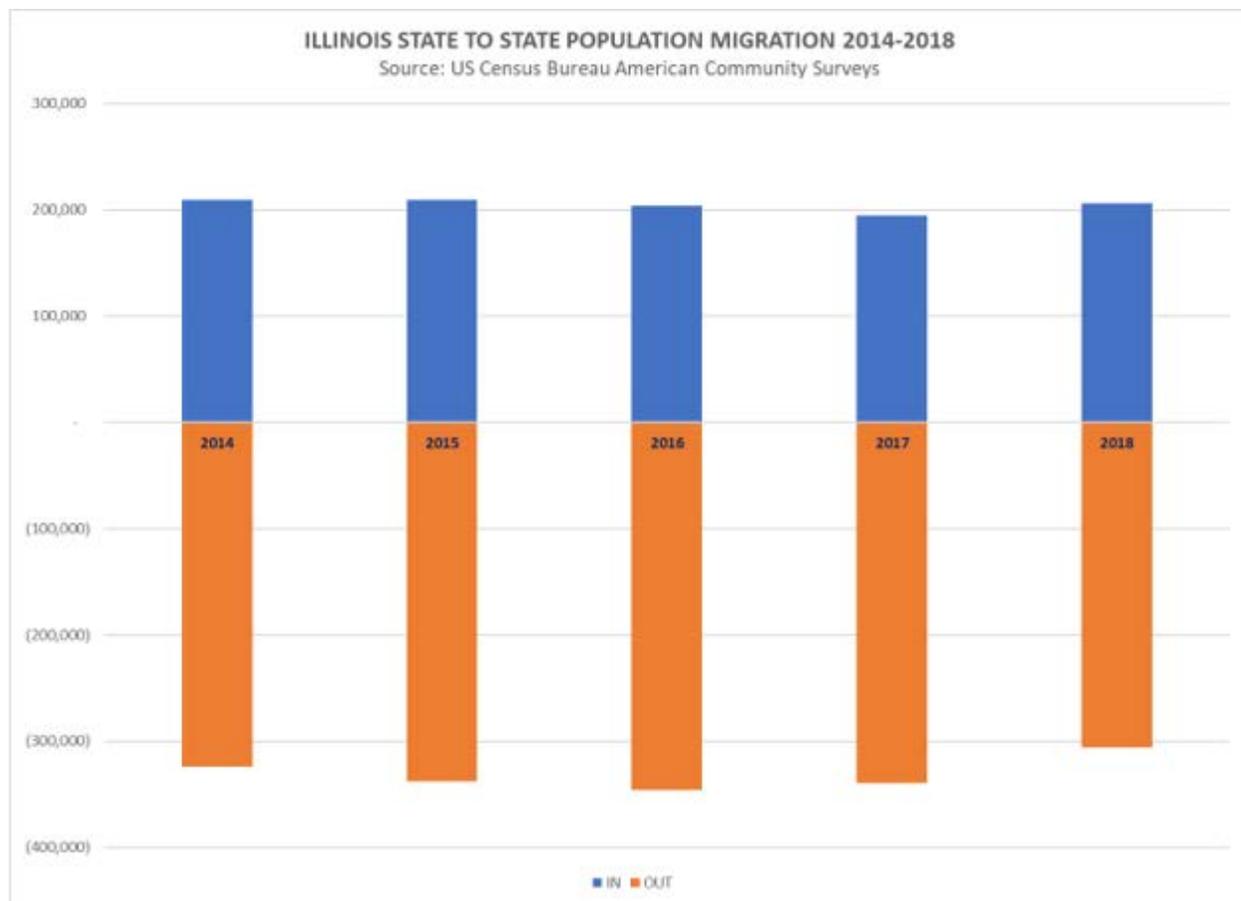
A chronic threat to maintaining a robust workforce is population loss due to changing demographics or outmigration. As with most Midwestern states, Illinois’ overall population and its share of the national population have been trending downward for years. The Illinois Congressional delegation has been reduced with every decennial census since 1970 because our population growth did not keep pace with other states, or our population dropped outright.

Using data from the US Census Bureau’s annual American Community Survey, migration out has exceeded migration in each year since 2014.⁷ Over this time frame the migration has ranged from a net loss of 144,514 in 2017 to a net loss of 99,007 in 2018.

Migration Table 1

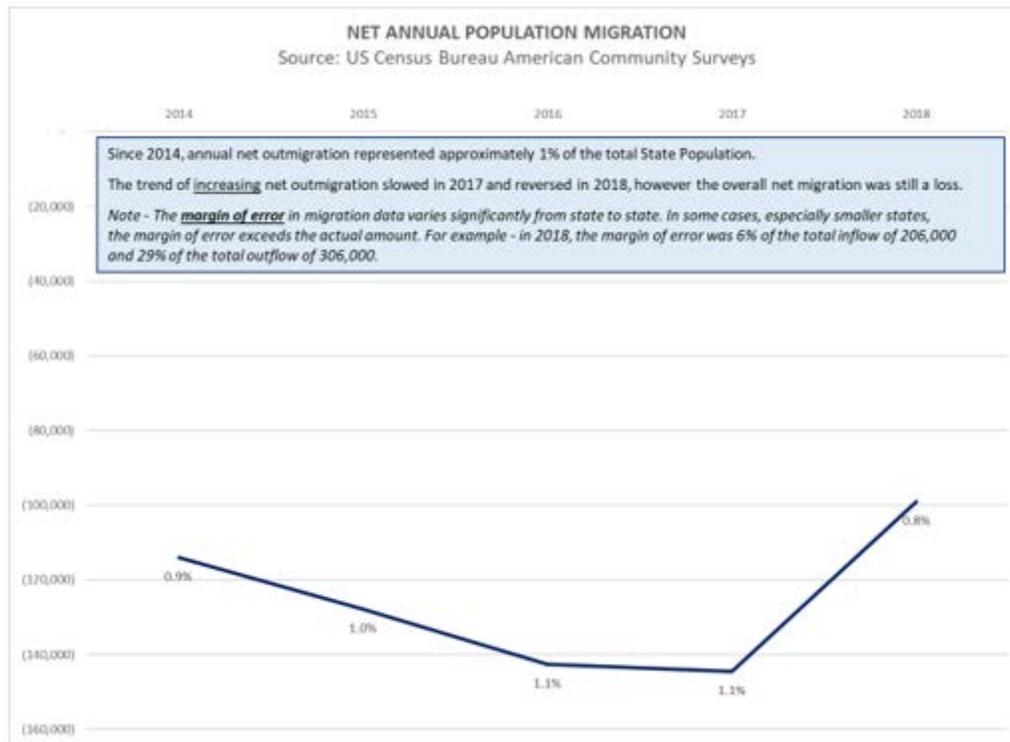
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
IN	209,536	209,828	203,713	195,092	206,620
OUT	(323,579)	(337,705)	(346,330)	(339,606)	(305,627)
NET	(114,043)	(127,877)	(142,617)	(144,514)	(99,007)

Migration Chart 1



The annual net loss represents approximately one percent of the state’s total population. While 2017 is the recent low point, the rate trend of accelerating losses lessened that year and the trend actually reversed in 2018 as shown in the chart below. This chart also provides the percent of the total state population the annual net loss represents.

Migration Chart 2



Illinois has a total population nearly double of each of the next most populous border states, Indiana and Missouri. Of these states, all but Illinois and Missouri experienced net migration-related growth in 2018.

Migration Table 2

	Total Pop	IN	OUT	NET	Net as % of Total Pop
IL	12,599,244	206,620	305,627	(99,007)	-0.8%
IN	6,612,948	145,256	136,563	8,693	0.1%
IA	3,119,306	74,199	70,659	3,540	0.1%
KY	4,414,714	110,456	100,514	9,942	0.2%
MO	6,053,109	152,326	174,949	(22,623)	-0.4%
WI	5,751,525	114,613	105,920	8,693	0.2%

Focusing on outmigration, an analysis of where the 305,600 Illinois residents that left the state migrated in 2018 reveals the following insights:

Migration Table 3

Destination	Number	Percent
Border States	97,559	32%
Warm “Retirement” States	82,275	27%
All Others	125,793	41%

- Nearly one-third went to a border state
- Slightly less than this amount went to a warm-weather state
- The most popular border state destination was Indiana, with 31,600 migrations
- The most popular destination state overall was Florida, with 27,600 migrations

Migration Tables 4 & 5

ILLINOIS OUTMIGRATION TO BORDER STATES

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
IN	38,177	34,221	29,883	29,526	31,556
IA	13,612	19,702	14,948	12,997	15,699
KY	5,478	4,776	6,394	5,333	5,108
MO	24,210	23,915	25,906	22,767	20,041
WI	30,423	23,233	31,323	26,963	25,155
Border States	111,900	105,847	108,454	97,586	97,559

ILLINOIS OUTMIGRATION TO WARM STATES

AZ	11,858	11,017	13,387	13,095	13,247
CA	21,441	26,189	21,539	27,117	22,165
FL	25,095	26,406	23,319	28,631	27,622
TX	23,258	21,927	21,848	26,214	19,241
Warm States	81,652	85,539	80,093	95,057	82,275
All Other States	130,027	146,319	157,783	146,963	125,793
TOTAL OUTMIGRATION	323,579	337,705	346,330	339,606	305,627

When compared to all states (and the District of Columbia) in 2018, Illinois is in the top five states for the number of people leaving, trailing only California, Florida, Texas, and New York. However, when we examine the outmigration number as a percent of the total population, Illinois drops to nearly the bottom third of the pack, ranking 33rd in the nation. So, while outmigration is larger than we would like, the significance of the outmigration number is lessened when viewed in the context of total population and how Illinois compares to the rest of the nation.

Furthermore, as detailed in the response report to the Governor’s EO 3 report, the last few decades have seen slow and steady depopulation of the less urbanized areas of states across the Midwest as economic forces have reduced job prospects in these regions. From 1990 to 2017, the Northwest, West Central, South and Southeast regions of Illinois lost more than 3% of their population at a time when the overall state population grew by more than 12%. Of equal concern is the aging population of these regions, which rank highest in their share of population age 65 or older, and rank among the lowest in their share of population below age 19. Finally, the percent of residents in these regions who are college graduates lags the state, indicating a “brain-drain” of the most educated members of these communities.

i. Employment and Unemployment

Table 10 provides population and employment information for working-age individuals in the State of Illinois, broken down by census categories of race and ethnicity.

Table 10: Working-Age Population and Labor Force Data

State of Illinois	16+ Year-Old Population	Percent of Population	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment/Population Ratio	Unemployment Rate
Population 16 years and over	10,234,674	100.0%	65.3%	60.8%	6.6%
White alone	7,489,194	73.2%	65.6%	62.1%	5.0%
Black or African American alone	1,423,878	13.9%	60.3%	50.8%	15.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	25,645	0.3%	65.1%	59.3%	8.6%
Asian alone	567,141	5.5%	66.2%	63.0%	4.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	3,708	0.0%	77.5%	71.0%	7.5%
Some other race alone	549,363	5.4%	72.1%	66.9%	7.1%
Two or more races	175,745	1.7%	68.8%	61.6%	10.0%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	1,534,115	15.0%	70.8%	65.6%	7.1%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	6,571,587	64.2%	65.0%	61.7%	4.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 2018 5-year estimates (Table S2301)

Overall, unemployment rates are highest (and labor force participation rates are lowest) for African-Americans. Looking deeper into this issue, unemployment rates for the 16-19 age group are much higher than the overall rate, and are especially high for African-Americans, Hispanics and those in the “other” race category. Part of this discrepancy among racial/ethnic groups may be related to living in areas where few appropriate job matches are available. Unemployment rates are lowest among Caucasians for the 20-24, 55-64, 65-69 and 70+ age groups, while Asians have the lowest rates for the 16-19 and 25-54 groupings.

While unemployment rates for youth (ages 16-19) are high, the rates for older workers (65+) have remained relatively low. This is likely a result of many older individuals leaving the labor force after separation from work (voluntarily or involuntarily). Other targeted populations include veterans, single-parent families (headed by either a male or female) and persons with disabilities. The unemployment rate for all veterans is below the rate for the entire population. However, the rate for veterans in the 18-34 age groups is still higher than the overall state average. Nevertheless, this gap has closed as fewer veterans are being discharged in recent years, resulting in fewer making the transition from the military to civilian employment. Unemployment rates for single-parent families remain higher for heads of households of both genders, but significantly higher for females compared to males. Rates for individuals with disabilities are higher than any other group except for youth. Attachment C (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20C%20-%20Labor%20Force,%20Employment%20and%20Unemployment%202020.pdf>) provides additional demographic details regarding the Illinois labor force, employment and unemployment during this period.

ii. Labor Market Trends

Key Labor Market Trends

The evolving workforce is a constant challenge to workforce and education systems. We must provide education and training to meet the demands of businesses but also be able to adjust our priorities and

service delivery strategies to anticipate medium- and long-term labor market trends. By 2020, on average, 65% of all jobs will require postsecondary education. However, Illinois is above the national trend with 70% of our jobs requiring postsecondary education.

Futurists and prognosticators are not united in their predictions, but there generally seems to be consensus on the following:

- Near-Term
 - Generation Gap
 - Baby boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and now Gen Z occupy the same workspace. That's four distinct generations with different views, expectations, and priorities. Companies will have to adopt new methods for just about everything — from recruitment and benefits to training and advancement; which means workforce development must also adopt new methods.
 - Ongoing Skill Gap Issues
 - Some executive surveys indicate nearly 80% of companies perceive the existence of a significant skill gap.
 - Meanwhile, surveys of workers indicate that the opportunity to continue learning and growing is becoming more important to employees.
 - Current Employee Retention & Engagement Statistics
 - 40% of employers plan to fill current and future openings with full-time workers, and 47% plan to hire part-time workers going into 2019 ([CareerBuilder](#))
 - 50% of HR managers have current openings for which they can't find qualified candidates ([CareerBuilder](#))
 - 36% of workers and nearly half of Millennials would consider quitting a job that didn't provide learning opportunities ([Docebo](#))
 - 70% of staff members would be at least somewhat likely to leave their current organizations and take a job with one that is known for investing in employee development and learning ([The Harris Poll](#))
 - Among employees who left their previous job, 34% said finding a new job with more career development opportunities spurred them on ([The Harris Poll](#))
 - Career development ranked 2nd to compensation as the reason employees left their organizations ([The Harris Poll](#))
 - When Millennials jump ship, it's most often because they feel underutilized and stagnant at work ([O.C. Tanner](#))

- Longer-Term
 - Continuous upskilling and digital dexterity will outweigh tenure and experience. The most highly valued work will still be cognitive in nature. Employees will have to apply creativity, critical thinking and constant [digital upskilling](#) to solve complex problems. Going forward, workers will need to change their skills at an accelerating pace.
 - Smart machines will be our co-workers. Artificial Intelligence (AI) will permeate the work landscape. [Smart machines](#) are getting smarter and more ubiquitous, not only completing [tasks previously reserved for humans](#), but also what was thought to be impossible for machines.
 - The use of automated kiosks is becoming more prevalent. We now check-in at the airport, doctor’s office and cell phone stores while handling our own check out at the big box retailers. A recent kiosk census report indicates there will be record growth for the interactive kiosk industry ‘as consumers continue to embrace self-service technology and businesses rush to reap the benefits of improved customer engagement.’ The most promising technologies include touchscreens, integration with mobile devices, and remote machine management. This transition to increasingly using kiosks and working with collaborative robots, or “cobots”, means continued demand for skilled manufacturing and technician workers such as fabricators, tool & die and mold building.
 - The federal Government Accountability Office (GAO) projects that the top three occupational groups to decline due to the adoption of advanced technologies between 2016 and 2026 will be Production (40 occupations), Office and Administrative Support (30 occupations), and Transportation and Material Moving (10 occupations).
 - With data analytics and AI-enabled tools striving to create decision-making as prejudice-free as possible, a mature conversation on diversity appears to be a quickly evolving trend. More companies today are coming forward to recognize the need for proper diversity education and not just sensitization. With that, the dialogue has shifted from having a laundry list for diversity and inclusion (DI) initiatives to more meaningful and actionable plans that could actually make a difference.
 - Talent Mobility
 - Employees are now choosing among jobs based on the level of work flexibility offered. As an increasingly important parameter for job- decisions, talent mobility will drive the quality of employee engagement, as well as the overall quality of the workforce. “This is a trend that shows no signs of stopping. Thirty-eight percent of hiring managers predict that their employees will work predominantly remotely in the next ten years,” [says](#) Zoe Harte, Senior Vice President, Human Resources and Talent Innovation, at Upwork.
 - Illinois is part of a National Governors’ Association on-demand workgroup exploring and working to define the on-demand world (e.g.: platform workers,

day-laborers, self-employed and independent contractors), and determine their needs and gaps of these workers, such as lack of worker protections and access to training. As part of this initiative, Illinois is currently working to define this population in Illinois and to develop innovative methods for them to access training to move into more sustaining work.

- Two potential growth sectors that are just now emerging in Illinois are in Information Technology and Agriculture:
 - There is an uptick in cyber-security training, which, although small, may continue to grow as increasing numbers of security breaches occur across many sectors.
 - With the legalization of industrial hemp production and the legalization of cannabis, we could see growth in the agricultural sector and the need for workers in both the agricultural side and the dispensary side. Both areas require short-term training at the entry level.

Gov. Pritzker’s Action Agenda to EO 3 recognizes this challenge and weaves throughout the Unified State Plan Illinois’ priority for revitalizing economic growth in the rapidly changing labor market and creating economic opportunity in communities across the state emphasizing disenfranchised populations. As education and workforce professionals, these trends will impact the services provided to these vulnerable populations. It will be incumbent upon them to create innovative solutions that will address barriers to employment and look at different educational models, such as shortening the time from credential attainment to employment. State approaches in Illinois will support these efforts by creating cross-cutting goals through common definitions, such as the career pathways dictionary framework and the service integration policy. These not only focus on the breakdown of silos but place importance on the use of current labor market information to provide career services to job seeker and employer customers.

Trends Across Key Industry Sectors & Occupations

Between 2008 and 2018, employment shifts occurred among U.S. industry sectors, featuring a reduction in goods-producing industries in favor of service-producing industries. This shift continued a long-term trend, with manufacturing employment declining due to strong productivity gains in high value-added industries and offshoring of low value-added production to lower-cost economies. But not all service-producing sectors saw equal employment growth during this ten-year span.

Among goods-producing industries in the U.S., mining and logging was the only sector in which employment held its own between 2008 and 2018. Maintaining this level of employment is primarily due to the oil production sector, which includes “fracking”. The share of construction employment has continued to decline in part because the housing industry has not yet completely recovered from the last recession. Manufacturing employment has decreased as a share of total employment in 2018 relative to 2008 because of the continuing structural shifts in the economy.

Table 11 shows the industry employment distribution of the U.S. and the Midwestern states. Aside from Kentucky, every state in the region has a smaller proportional share than the U.S. for mining and logging. This industry is relatively small in the remaining states. The construction industry shows that

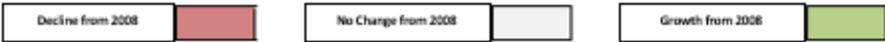
the U.S. has a higher proportional share of employment than all Midwestern states, except Iowa, which equals the nation at 4.9 percent. This is due in part to greater population growth in the nation relative to Midwestern states. The share for construction did increase over the last ten years for Iowa, Michigan, and Minnesota.

Manufacturing is still an important component of the Midwestern economy, even though the long-term trends of increased productivity and offshoring to low-cost economies have led to the loss of many manufacturing jobs. Midwest manufacturing employment accounts for more than a quarter of national manufacturing employment. A decrease was seen in the employment share for the U.S. (-1.3 percent) and all of the Midwestern states, except Michigan between 2008 and 2018. Illinois manufacturing employment declined 1.4 percent over the 10-year period. All of the Midwestern states had a higher share of manufacturing employment than the U.S. (8.5 percent) in 2018.

The share of employment in Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities increased to 5.2% in Illinois, 1.2 points higher than the United States and 1.9 points higher than the average of the other Midwestern states. In the region only Kentucky, at 5.9%, has a higher share of its workforce in this sector than Illinois.

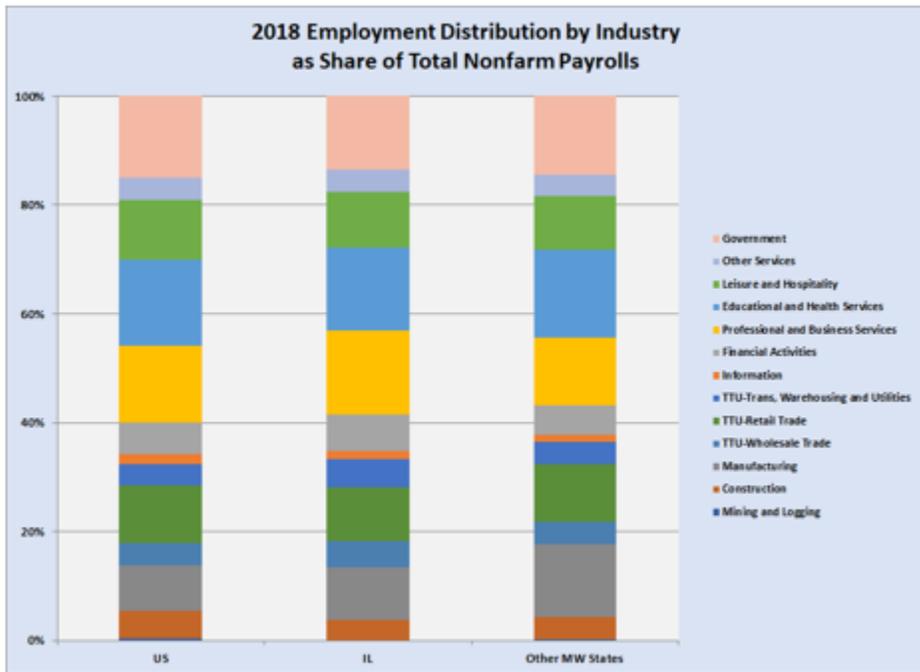
Table 11: Employment Distribution by Industry as a Share of Total Non-Farm Payrolls

	US	IL	IN	IA	KY	MI	MN	MO	OH	WI
Mining & Logging	0.5%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Construction	4.9%	3.7%	4.5%	4.9%	4.0%	3.8%	4.2%	4.2%	3.9%	4.1%
Manufacturing	8.5%	9.6%	17.2%	14.1%	13.0%	14.2%	10.9%	9.4%	12.6%	16.0%
Trade/Transportation/Utilities										
Wholesale Trade	3.9%	4.8%	3.8%	4.2%	3.9%	3.9%	4.4%	4.2%	4.2%	4.3%
Retail Trade	10.6%	9.9%	10.2%	11.3%	11.1%	10.7%	10.1%	10.8%	10.1%	10.3%
Trans, Warehousing & Utilities	4.0%	5.2%	4.9%	4.3%	5.9%	3.4%	3.6%	3.9%	4.1%	3.7%
Information	1.9%	1.5%	0.9%	1.4%	1.1%	1.3%	1.7%	1.7%	1.3%	1.6%
Financial Activities	5.7%	6.6%	4.4%	6.9%	4.8%	5.0%	6.2%	6.0%	5.5%	5.1%
Professional & Business Services	14.1%	15.6%	10.9%	8.9%	11.3%	14.9%	12.8%	13.4%	13.2%	11.0%
Educational & Health Services	15.9%	15.3%	15.1%	14.8%	14.4%	15.4%	18.4%	16.6%	16.8%	15.4%
Leisure & Hospitality	11.0%	10.1%	9.8%	9.1%	10.2%	9.8%	9.3%	10.6%	10.2%	9.5%
Other Services	3.9%	4.2%	4.2%	3.6%	3.4%	3.8%	3.8%	4.0%	3.8%	5.1%
Government	15.1%	13.5%	13.7%	16.4%	16.2%	13.7%	14.4%	15.0%	14.0%	13.7%

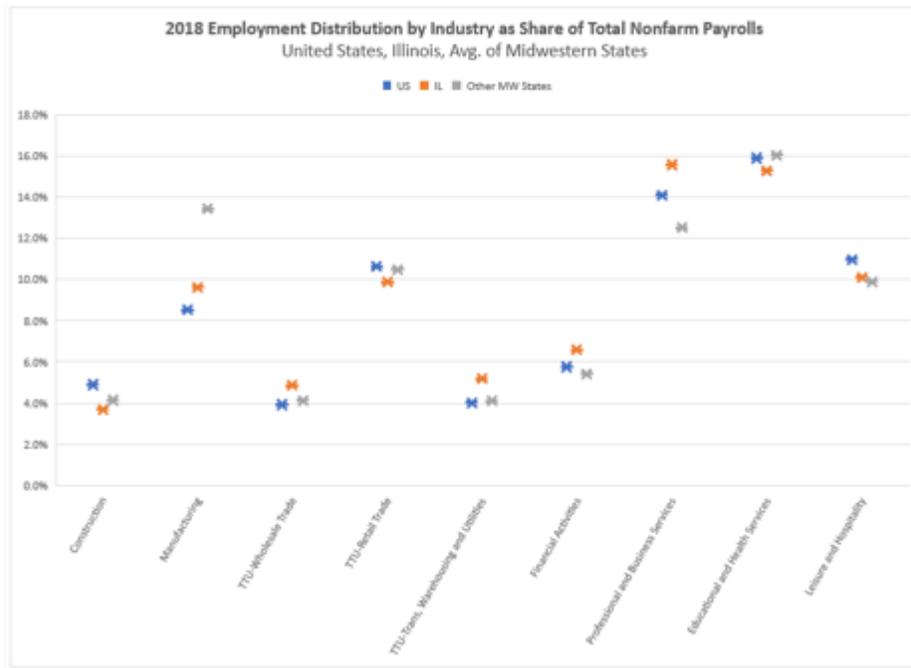


Charts 1 and 1b, based on Table 11, provide a graphic representation of this analysis.

Chart 1 – 2018 Distribution of Industry IL vs. U.S. and Average of Other Midwest States

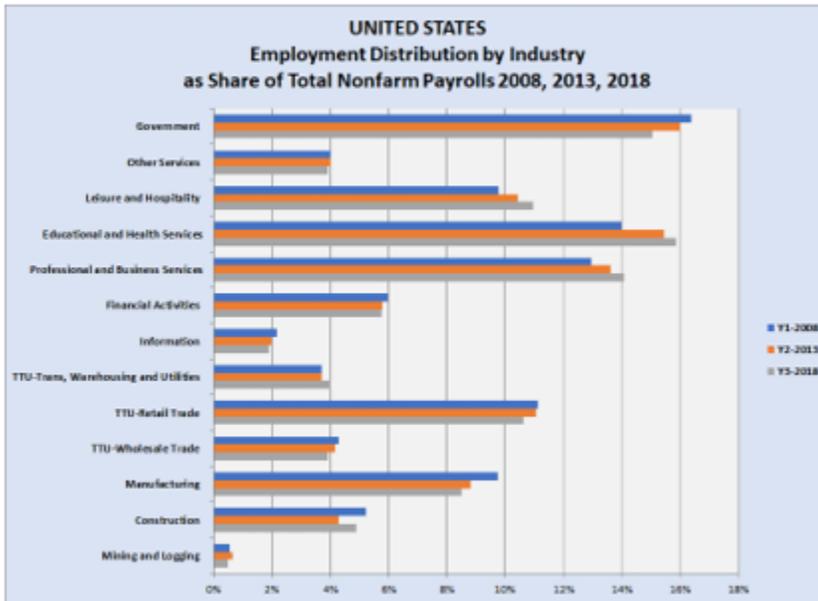


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program 2018
Chart 1b (Alternate visualization of selected industries in Chart 1)



Charts 2-4 show how the industry distribution has changed over the last decade, with data shown for 2008, 2013 and 2018.

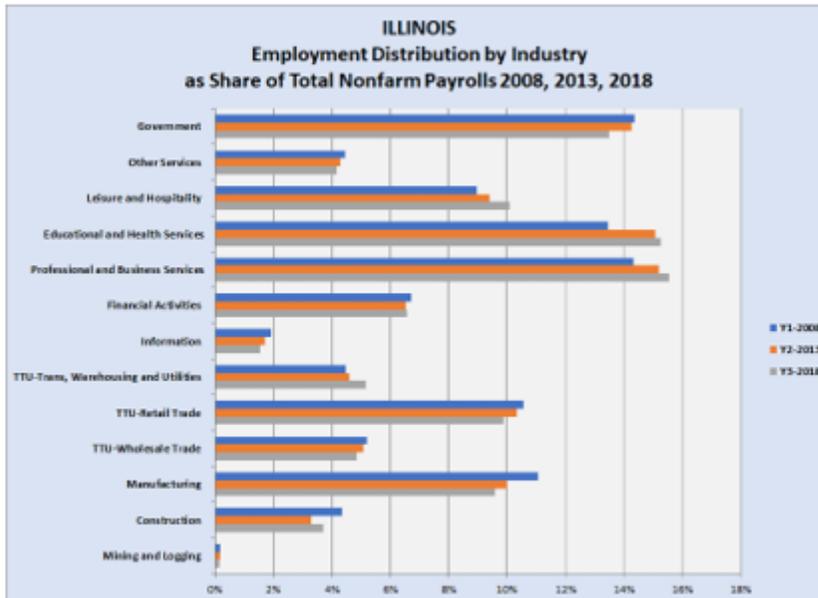
Chart 2 - U.S. Employment Distribution by Industry as Share of Total Nonfarm Payrolls 2008, 2013, 2018



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program 2008, 2013, 2018

In the United States, the employment distribution changed between 2008 and 2018 with increases in Educational & Health Services, Leisure & Hospitality, and Professional & Business Services, and declines in Government and Manufacturing.

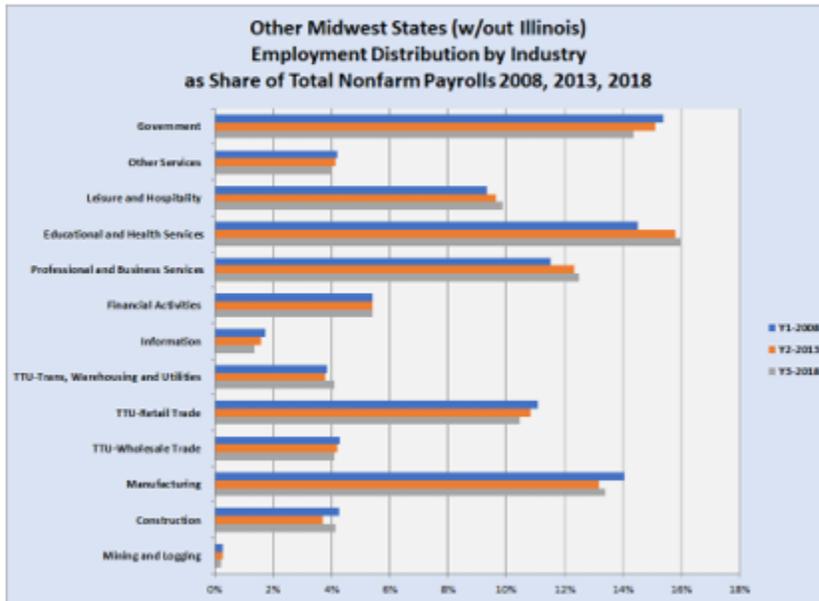
Chart 3 – IL Employment Distribution by Industry as Share of Total Nonfarm Payrolls 2008, 2013, 2018



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program 2008, 2013, 2018

In Illinois, the employment distribution changed between 2008 and 2018 with increases in Educational & Health Services, Professional & Business Services, and Leisure & Hospitality and declines in Manufacturing and Government.

Chart 4 – MW (outside of IL) Employment Distribution by Industry as Share of Total Nonfarm Payrolls 2008, 2013, 2018



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program 2008, 2013, 2018

In other Midwest states, the employment distribution changed between 2008 and 2018 with increases in Educational & Health Services and Professional & Business Services, and a decline in Government.

Table 12 – Employment Distribution and Change: 2008-2018

Industry	UNITED STATES					ILLINOIS					Other MW States				
	Y1-2008	Y2-2013	Y3-2018	Percent Change		Y1-2008	Y2-2013	Y3-2018	Percent Change		Y1-2008	Y2-2013	Y3-2018	Percent Change	
				Y1 - Y3	Y1 - Y3				Y1 - Y3	Y1 - Y3					
Mining and Logging	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	(0.1)	-16.7%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	(0.1)	-50.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	(0.1)	-33.3%
Construction	5.2%	4.3%	4.9%	(0.3)	-5.8%	4.3%	3.3%	3.7%	(0.6)	-14.0%	4.3%	3.7%	4.1%	(0.2)	-4.7%
Manufacturing	9.8%	8.8%	8.5%	(1.3)	-13.3%	11.1%	10.0%	9.6%	(1.5)	-13.5%	14.1%	13.2%	13.4%	(0.7)	-5.0%
TTU-Wholesale Trade	4.3%	4.2%	3.9%	(0.4)	-9.3%	5.2%	5.1%	4.8%	(0.4)	-7.7%	4.3%	4.2%	4.1%	(0.2)	-4.7%
TTU-Retail Trade	11.1%	11.1%	10.6%	(0.5)	-4.5%	10.6%	10.3%	9.9%	(0.7)	-6.6%	11.1%	10.8%	10.5%	(0.6)	-5.4%
TTU-Trans, Warehousing and Utilities	3.7%	3.7%	4.0%	0.3	8.1%	4.5%	4.6%	5.2%	0.7	15.6%	3.8%	3.8%	4.1%	0.3	7.9%
Information	2.2%	2.0%	1.9%	(0.3)	-13.6%	1.9%	1.7%	1.5%	(0.4)	-18.8%	1.7%	1.6%	1.4%	(0.3)	-17.6%
Financial Activities	6.0%	5.8%	5.7%	(0.3)	-5.0%	6.7%	6.5%	6.6%	(0.1)	-2.1%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	-	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	13.0%	13.6%	14.1%	1.1	8.5%	14.3%	15.2%	15.6%	1.3	9.1%	11.5%	12.3%	12.5%	1.0	8.7%
Educational and Health Services	14.0%	15.5%	15.9%	1.9	13.6%	13.5%	15.1%	15.3%	1.8	13.3%	14.3%	15.8%	16.0%	1.5	10.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	9.8%	10.5%	11.0%	1.2	12.2%	9.0%	9.4%	10.1%	1.1	12.2%	9.3%	9.7%	9.9%	0.6	6.5%
Other Services	4.0%	4.0%	3.9%	(0.1)	-2.5%	4.4%	4.3%	4.2%	(0.2)	-4.5%	4.2%	4.2%	4.0%	(0.2)	-4.8%
Government	16.4%	16.0%	15.1%	(1.3)	-7.9%	14.4%	14.3%	13.5%	(0.9)	-6.2%	15.4%	15.1%	14.4%	(1.0)	-6.5%

Table 12 adds data from 2008 and 2013 to Table 9 to give a side-by-side view of employment distribution at three different points in time, 2008, 2013 and 2018, at the national and state levels, and in the other Midwest states, to show how the employment distribution has changed over time and how these shifts in Illinois differ from the US and other Midwest states.

The Change Y1 – Y3 columns indicate the change in the sector’s share of the total between 2008 and 2018. A positive number indicates the share of total employment increased and a negative number indicates the sector’s share of total employment declined.

In most cases the trends align at all three geographic levels except for the following significant outliers:

- Illinois *increase* greater than US and Midwest:

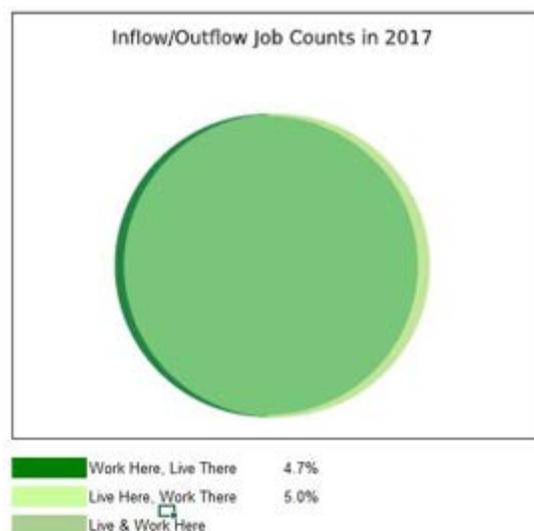
- TTU-Transport/Warehouse/Utilities - the share increase in Illinois changed at just over double the rate of the US and Midwest
- Illinois *decrease* greater than US and Midwest:
 - Construction - Despite construction employment growth in Illinois, the share of jobs in construction as a percent of the total fell in Illinois more so than in the US and Midwest states.
 - Manufacturing - the share decrease in Illinois was in line with the US; but the 1.5-point drop in Illinois represents a -13.5% change while the 0.7-point drop in the other Midwest states represents a decrease of just -5.0%.

This means that over the past ten years, when compared to changes in the US and Midwest, in Illinois the share of employment in Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities **increased more**, while the share of employment in Manufacturing and Mining & Logging **decreased more** in Illinois.

Commuting Workers

The US Census Bureau, not the DOL Bureau of Labor Statistics, is the keeper of data on where people live and work. This data is sourced through census data and tax data housed at the Internal Revenue Service. The most recent worker inflow / outflow data available is for 2017, and it indicates Illinois is near equilibrium for cross-border workers. Of approximately 6 million workers, 4.7 percent work here but live elsewhere, while 5.0 percent live here but work elsewhere. Almost the same numbers of people commute into Illinois for work as go to their jobs in other states. So, the overall net impact of cross-border workers is minimal.

Inflow/Outflow Chart 1



A deeper analysis of worker inflow and outflow data indicates the vast majority of cross-state employment involves workers aged 30 - 54, earning more than \$40,000 annual wages working in non-goods producing, services industries. Generally, the inflow and outflow by worker type follows a similar pattern - the items with the largest inflow also have the largest outflow. However, there are

types with a bit of wider margin, notably workers under age 29 and workers earning less than \$15,000 per year and workers in the Other Services industry class have greater outflow than inflow.

Inflow/Outflow Table 1

	Number of Workers in Thousands				
	INFLOW		OUTFLOW		NET
	Count	Share	Count	Share	OUTFLOW
Workers - Inflow / Outflow	276.7	100.0%	296.2	100.0%	(19.5)
Workers Aged 29 or younger	59.1	21.3%	78.7	26.6%	(19.6)
Workers Aged 30 to 54	151.3	54.7%	152.3	51.4%	(1.0)
Workers Aged 55 or older	66.3	24.0%	65.2	22.0%	1.1
Workers Earning \$1,250 per month or less	56.3	20.4%	73.5	24.8%	(17.2)
Workers Earning \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	85.7	31.0%	93.7	31.6%	(7.9)
Workers Earning More than \$3,333 per month	134.6	48.6%	129.0	43.5%	5.6
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	56.6	20.5%	59.2	20.0%	(2.6)
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	62.4	22.5%	62.4	21.1%	0.0
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	157.7	57.0%	174.7	59.0%	(16.9)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics - 2017

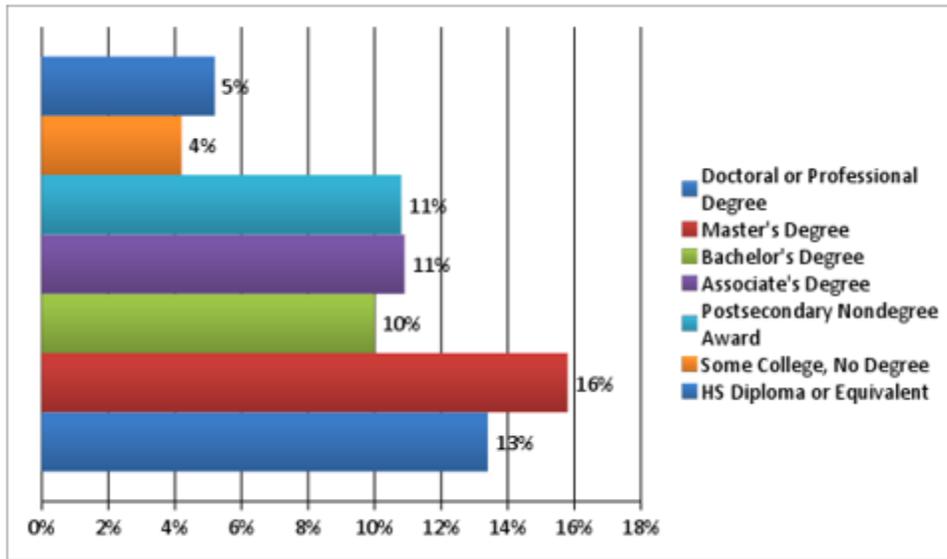
iii. Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

Occupational skill requirements are increasing across the workforce due to a number of factors, including the increasing pace of technological change and the increasingly global nature of the economy. As detailed in the previous section, (“Labor Market Trends”) expectations are that creativity and critical thinking will join digital dexterity at the very apex of skill needs across the labor force. Technology-fueled economic forces, such as automation, Artificial Intelligence and deep data analytics will continue to supplant human muscle and (increasingly) human intelligence.

As a recently released McKinsey Global Institute report puts it, “Millions of jobs (nationally) with a high share of automatable tasks could be phased out in the decade ahead. Others will be created, more than making up for those losses in many scenarios— *although they may be different occupations located in different places*”⁸ (emphasis ours). Add to this the increasing desire (and need) for talent mobility, both geographically and occupationally, and the pressures upon a state like Illinois to educate, train and fully employ its workforce is more critical than ever.

In its most recent set of occupational employment projections, the BLS shows the increasing need for advanced education and training to qualify for occupations with the highest growth rates.

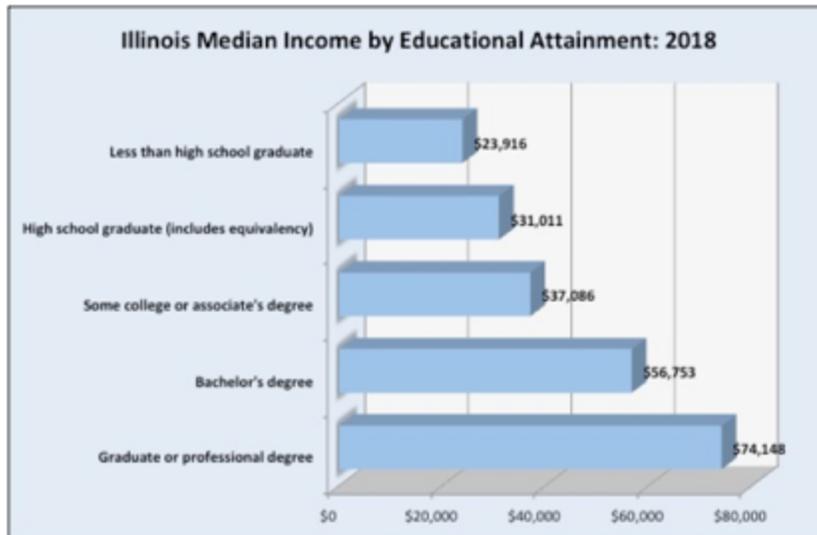
Chart 5 – Projected U.S. Employment Growth by Educational Requirements: 2016-26



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections Program 2016-2026

Growth is highest for entry-level jobs requiring education or training credentials beyond high school. Moreover, the education and skill requirements of occupations are directly related to the earning power of those occupations, as evidenced by Illinois' data from the 2018 American Community Survey.

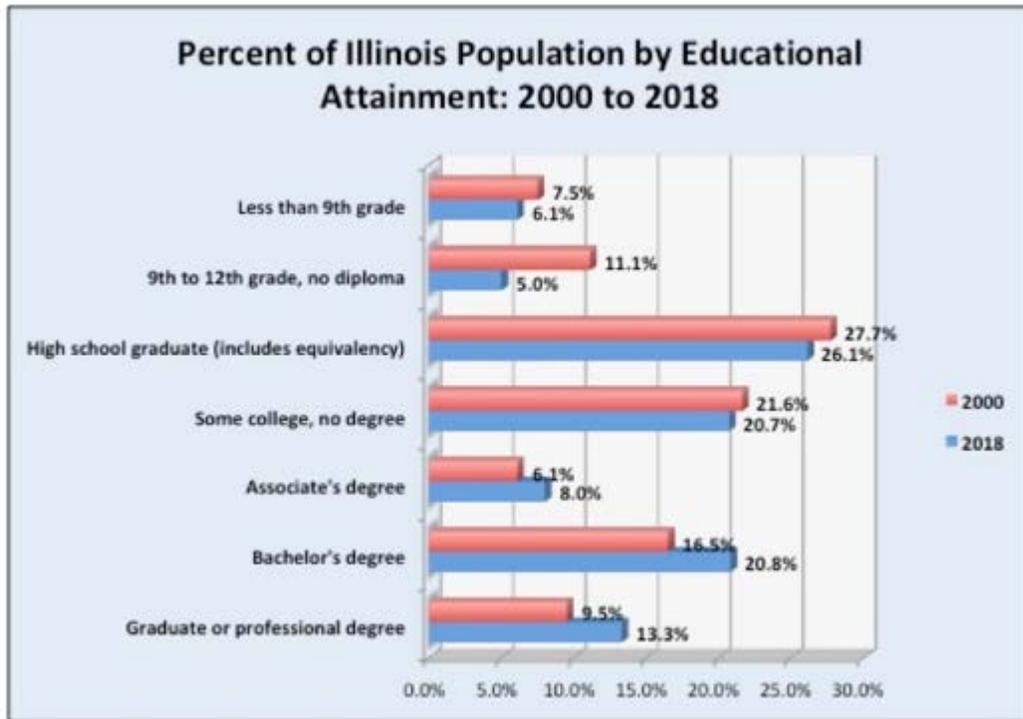
Chart 6 – Illinois Median Income by Educational Attainment: 2018



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates: 2018

These data sets highlight the importance and the value of educational achievement and degree attainment. For Illinois to compete in this globalized, technology-charged economy, we must train our workforce to meet the challenges of these increasing education and skill requirements. Since the turn of the century, Illinois has made progress in increasing the overall educational attainment of its population. However, the number of individuals with low literacy skills has remained a significant concern as we seek to meet the demand for an educated and skilled workforce.

Chart 7 – Percent of Illinois Population by Educational Attainment: 2000 to 2018



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates: 2018

The percentage of Illinois’ population (age 25+) with some type of post-secondary degree increased from 32% in 2000 to over 42% in 2018. However, this number is still too low. Illinois has committed to ensuring that 60% of the state’s population has a high-quality degree or credential by 2025, an initiative referred to as “60 by 2025.” As these data show, the state is clearly moving towards that goal, but there is still a long way to go in the next decade. Illinois’ continued economic and income growth is dependent on reaching the “60 by 2025” goal.

Chart 8 and Table 13, which follow, show data regarding the incidences of various target population cohorts in Illinois. Target populations, as described in TEGL 19-16, are as follows in the capture excerpt below.

9. **Priority Populations under WIOA.** Services provided to adults and dislocated workers under title I of WIOA can be a pathway to the middle class and to maintain and build skills to remain in the middle class. Across all titles, WIOA focuses on serving “individuals with barriers to employment”, defined in WIOA section 3(24) and seeks to ensure access to quality services for these populations. The WIOA Final Rules discuss priority and special populations for the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs at 20 CFR 680.600 through .660. These populations are discussed below:

Individuals with Barriers to Employment

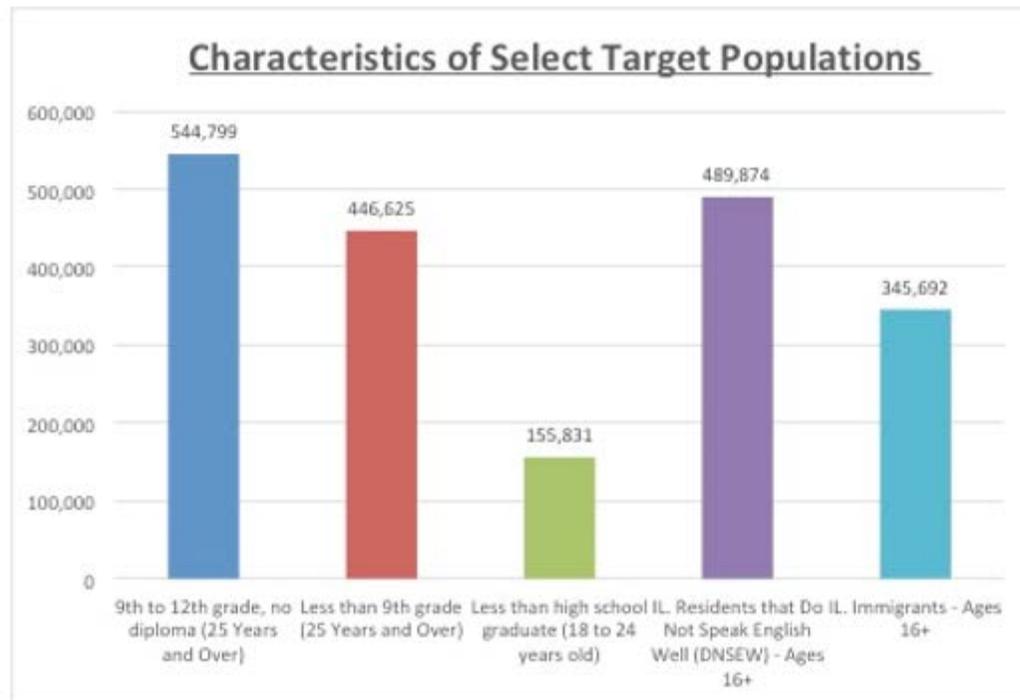
The populations included in the “individuals with barriers to employment” in WIOA sec. 3(24) include:

- (a) Displaced homemakers (as defined in WIOA sec. 3(16));
- (b) Low-income individuals (as defined in WIOA sec. 3(36));
- (c) Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians (as defined in WIOA sec. 166(b));
- (d) Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities (as defined in WIOA sec. 3(25) (includes individuals who are in receipt of Social Security Disability Insurance);
- (e) Older individuals (age 55 and older) (as defined in WIOA sec. 3(39));
- (f) Ex-offenders (“offender” as defined in WIOA sec. 3(38));
- (g) Homeless individuals or homeless children and youths (see Attachment III);

8

- (h) Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system;
- (i) Individuals who are:
 - (1) English language learners (WIOA sec. 203(7)),
 - (2) Individuals who have low levels of literacy (an individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, or in the individual’s family, or in society); and
 - (3) Individuals facing substantial cultural barriers;
- (j) Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined in WIOA sec. 167(i)(1-3);
- (k) Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime TANF eligibility;
- (l) Single parents (including single pregnant women);
- (m) Long-term unemployed individuals (unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks);
and
- (n) Such other groups as the Governor involved determines to have barriers to employment

Chart 8 – Target Population Characteristics



Sources: 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; 2018 ICCB Index of Need Report

In Illinois, approximately 700,000 people have some high school education but do not have a diploma, and nearly 450,000 people have less than a 9th-grade education. These individuals could benefit from a variety of workforce and adult education programs, especially bridge programs that incorporate English, reading and math skills contextualized for a targeted industry.

Table 13 provides information on the sub-populations that may have barriers to employment and are targeted to be served by one or more of the WIOA core programs. These data, where available, will be provided at the regional level for utilization in developing, aligning and integrating service delivery strategies as well as resources in each region. Data were sourced from a variety of national collections and Illinois-specific administrative data systems.

Table 13 – Target Population Characteristics

Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population 2018 Estimate (U.S. Census Quick Facts)	12,741,080
Low Income Indicators:	
Adults (Age 16+) in Poverty 2017 (ICCB Index of Need table 6)	1,130,946
Public Aid Recipients 2017 (ICCB Index of Need table 3)	3,010,986
Adult Public Aid Recipients 2017 (ICCB Index of Need table 3)	1,660,857
TANF Recipients Monthly Average 2017 (IDHS online)	63,860

SNAP Recipients Monthly Average 2018 (IDHS online)	1,797,882
Estimated Individuals with a Disability 2017 (American Community Survey table S1810)	1,388,827
Adults with Disabilities (age 18-75+) 2017 (American Community Survey table S1810)	1,290,787
DHS Division of Rehabilitation Services-Vocational Rehabilitation Program Data Summary FY2019:	
Number Served (Age 25+)	17,851
Number Served Youth (Age <25)	28,819
Number in Plan Status (Age 25+)	5,270
Number in Plan Status Youth (Age <25)	15,681
Successful Employment (Age 25+)	2,472
Successful Employment Youth (Age <25)	2,647
IDHS Prioritization of Urgency of Needs for Services (PUNS) Reports - Summary by Diagnosis Code as of August 2019 (Active counts of residents with disabilities in potential need of DHS-funded services) (DHS online):	
Autism	5,834
Childhood Disintegrative Disorder	58
Pervasive Developmental Disorder	251
Cerebral Palsy	611
Mild Intellectual Disability	3,520
Moderate ID	2,724
Severe ID	821
Profound ID	333
Unspecified Intellectual Disability	8,761
Epilepsy	1,145
Other Diagnosis Codes	507

Adult Parolee Population, June 30, 2017 (DOC online)	25,974
Youth in Aftercare Population, April 2019 (DJJ online)	843
Population in Households in which English is not the Primary Language Spoken 2017 (ICCB Index of Need table 5)	2,796,360
Average Annual Unemployed 2018 (Current Population Survey)	321,909
Estimated: Unemployed 27+ Weeks 2018 (Current Population Survey)	69,854
Older Individuals (Age 55+) 2017 (American Fact Finder)	3,483,291
Homeless Individuals 2018 Estimate (U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness)	10,643
Unaccompanied Young Adults (Age 18-24)	684
Single Parents 2017 (American Community Survey table B09002)	777,109
Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers - 2019 Domestic & WIOA-Eligible (IDES)	613
Veterans – Estimate 2017 (American Community Survey table S2101)	
Total	614,725
Age 18-34	48,120
Age 35-54	134,292
Age 55 and over	432,313
Total in Foster Care 2019 (DCFS web):	14,564
Department/Private/Fictive Foster Care	5,821
Relative Foster Care	8,933
Institutional/Group Care	1,337
Exiting Foster Care (Age 18+)	896

iv. Skill Gaps

Gov. Pritzker’s Action Agenda to Executive Order 3 describes skills gap as arguably Illinois’ most serious barrier to economic prosperity. Building a pool of job seekers and workers with the right skills at the right time is essential if Illinois businesses and workers are to compete in the global economy today and in the future. All three of the action areas that frame his workforce development agenda recognize the importance of investing in skill development that supports regional cluster strategies, prepares Illinois workers for careers in high-demand industries and shortens the time required to connect skilled workers with available employment opportunities.

Table 14 identifies the top 10 occupations with the greatest number of projected annual openings grouped by educational attainment requirements, along with average entry-level and mid-career level Illinois wages.

Table 14 – Occupations by Educational Attainment Requirement

EDUCATION BEYOND BACHELOR'S DEGREE				
Occupation	Annual Openings	Hourly Wages		Skills
		Entry	Experienced	
General & Operations Managers	11,337	\$24.35	\$78.68	Active Listening, Coordination, Monitoring
Management Analysts	4,171	\$22.89	\$57.15	Active Listening, Critical Thinking, Reading Comprehension
Financial Managers	3,448	\$37.25	\$85.71	Active Listening, Critical Thinking, Monitoring
Sales Managers	2,356	\$34.26	\$77.63	Persuasion, Active Listening, Speaking
Clergy	1,934	\$14.46	\$29.69	Speaking, Active Listening, Service Orientation
Lawyers	1,871	\$33.01	\$93.82	Active Listening, Speaking, Reading Comprehension
Marketing Managers	1,375	\$35.24	\$76.21	Active Learning, Active Listening, Critical Thinking
Computer & Information Systems Managers	1,372	\$44.28	\$81.63	Critical Thinking, Active Listening, Reading Comprehension
Administrative Services Managers	1,309	\$28.14	\$56.49	Speaking, Active Listening, Coordination
Chief Executives	1,266	\$55.03	\$138.40	Judgment/Decision Making, Complex Problem Solving, Critical Thinking
BACHELOR'S DEGREE				
Occupation	Annual Openings	Hourly Wages		Skills
		Entry	Experienced	
Registered Nurses	8,692	\$25.48	\$40.55	Active Listening, Social Perceptiveness, Service Orientation
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	5,572	\$19.19	\$42.17	Active Listening, Critical Thinking, Reading Comprehension
Accountants & Auditors	5,507	\$23.80	\$46.56	Active Listening, Mathematics, Reading Comprehension
Insurance Sales Agents	4,368	\$14.55	\$42.86	Active Listening, Reading Comprehension, Speaking
Elem. School Teachers, Ex. Special Ed.	4,319	N/A	N/A	Instructing, Speaking, Learning Strategies
Secondary Teachers, Ex. Spec/Voc. Ed.	3,107	N/A	N/A	Instructing, Learning Strategies, Speaking
Market Research Analysts & Specialists	2,960	\$16.87	\$36.04	Reading Comprehension, Active Listening, Complex Problem Solving
Software Developers, Applications	2,694	\$31.18	\$54.08	Programming, System Analysis, System Evaluation
Middle School Teachers, Ex. Special/Voc Ed	2,233	N/A	N/A	Instructing, Speaking, Active Listening
Computer Systems Analysts	2,232	\$27.80	\$50.55	Critical Thinking, Active Listening, Reading Comprehension
ASSOCIATE DEGREE				
Occupation	Annual Openings	Hourly Wages		Skills
		Entry	Experienced	
Registered Nurses	8,692	\$25.48	\$40.55	Active Listening, Social Perceptiveness, Service Orientation
Computer User Support Specialists	2,218	\$15.21	\$30.63	Active Listening, Speaking, Reading Comprehension
Paralegals & Legal Assistants	1,298	\$17.72	\$32.37	Reading Comprehension, Active Listening, Speaking
Computer Occupations, All	1,194	N/A	N/A	Critical Thinking, Reading Comprehension, Active Listening
Computer Network Support Specialists	837	\$21.37	\$36.79	Critical Thinking, Active Listening, Judgement/Decision Making
Physical Therapist Assistants	733	\$20.22	\$31.76	Active Listening, Monitoring, Social Perceptiveness
Dental Hygienists	583	\$26.49	\$39.14	Speaking, Active Listening, Critical Thinking
Medical Records/Health Information Techs	530	\$14.26	\$25.90	Reading Comprehension, Active Listening, Critical Thinking
Life/Phys/Social Science Techs, All Other	442	\$16.81	\$28.47	Active Listening, Critical Thinking, Reading Comprehension
Engineering Techs, Ex. Drafters, All Other	434	\$20.50	\$35.73	Active Listening, Critical Thinking, Reading Comprehension
POSTSECONDARY VOCATIONAL AWARD				
Occupation	Annual Openings	Hourly Wages		Skills
		Entry	Experienced	
Nursing Assistants	7,341	\$11.06	\$15.25	Service Orientation, Active Listening, Social Perceptiveness
Hairdressers/Hairstylists/Cosmetologists	3,021	\$8.95	\$17.08	Active Listening, Speaking, Service Orientation
Automotive Service Techs/Mechanics	3,005	\$12.25	\$27.27	Equipment Maintenance, Repairing, Troubleshooting
Fitness Trainers & Aerobics Instructors	2,834	\$10.40	\$28.45	Instructing, Service Orientation, Social Perceptiveness
Preschool Teachers, Ex. Special Education	2,226	\$10.69	\$17.37	Speaking, Learning Strategies, Instructing
Medical Secretaries	1,734	\$13.20	\$19.60	Speaking, Active Listening, Service Orientation
Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses	1,635	\$19.12	\$27.27	Service Orientation, Active Listening, Coordination
Bus/Truck/Diesel Engine Mechanics	960	\$16.64	\$30.11	Repairing, Troubleshooting, Operation & Control
Library Technicians	929	\$11.66	\$20.27	Reading Comprehension, Speaking, Active Listening
Emergency Medical Techs & Paramedics	916	\$11.37	\$24.56	Critical Thinking, Active Listening, Coordination

LONG-TERM ON-THE-JOB TRAINING				
Occupation	Annual Openings	Hourly Wages		Skills
		Entry	Experienced	
Cooks, Restaurant	7,461	\$10.26	\$14.86	Coordination, Monitoring, Active Listening
Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	6,108	\$12.52	\$25.77	Equipment Maintenance, Repairing, Troubleshooting
Farmers, Ranchers & Other Ag Managers	4,393	\$19.39	\$38.49	Critical Thinking, Judgement/Decision Making, Speaking
Machinists	3,625	\$12.02	\$23.81	Operation Monitoring, Critical Thinking, Operation & Control
Carpenters	3,250	\$15.73	\$39.93	Active Listening, Monitoring, Speaking
Electricians	2,580	\$22.80	\$43.28	Troubleshooting, Repairing, Active Listening
Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers	2,376	\$22.94	\$43.14	Active Listening, Critical Thinking, Speaking
Plumbers, Pipefitters & Steamfitters	2,158	\$22.13	\$46.19	Active Listening, Critical Thinking, Judgement/Decision Making
Flight Attendants	1,617	N/A	N/A	Speaking, Service Orientation, Social Perceptiveness
Welders, Cutters, Solderers & Brazers	1,537	\$15.03	\$23.46	Critical Thinking, Operation & Control, Reading Comprehension

MODERATE-TERM ON-THE-JOB TRAINING				
Occupation	Annual Openings	Hourly Wages		Skills
		Entry	Experienced	
Customer Service Representatives	15,626	\$11.96	\$21.31	Active Listening, Speaking, Service Orientation
Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer	8,184	\$14.88	\$27.64	Operation & Control, Operation Monitoring, Time Management
Secretaries, Ex. Legal/Medical/Executive	8,170	\$11.85	\$21.43	Writing, Active Listening, Reading Comprehension
Sales Reps/Wholesale/Mfg, Ex. Tech/Scientific	7,989	\$16.00	\$41.41	Active Listening, Speaking, Persuasion
Bookkeeping/Accounting/Auditing Clerks	6,173	\$13.50	\$23.92	Active Listening, Reading Comprehension, Speaking
Sales Representatives, Services, All Other	5,282	\$13.71	\$38.89	Critical Thinking, Reading Comprehension, Active Listening
Production Workers, All Other	5,171	\$11.67	\$20.79	Operation & Control, Active Listening, Monitoring
Construction Laborers	4,261	\$14.31	\$36.08	Active Listening, Coordination, Operation Monitoring
Executive Secretaries & Adm. Assistants	2,910	\$19.40	\$32.61	Active Listening, Reading Comprehension, Speaking
Medical Assistants	2,579	\$12.96	\$19.42	Speaking, Active Listening, Reading Comprehension

SHORT-TERM ON-THE-JOB TRAINING				
Occupation	Annual Openings	Hourly Wages		Skills
		Entry	Experienced	
Combined Food Prep. & Serving Workers	31,327	\$9.04	\$11.51	Active Listening, Service Orientation, Speaking
Retail Salespersons	27,712	\$9.61	\$15.90	Active Listening, Persuasion, Speaking
Cashiers	23,661	\$9.20	\$12.26	Active Listening, Service Orientation, Speaking
Laborers/Freight/Stock & Material Movers	22,718	\$10.49	\$16.49	Coordination, Critical Thinking, Operation & Control
Waiters & Waitresses	19,437	\$8.89	\$12.07	Active Listening, Service Orientation, Social Perceptiveness
Office Clerks, General	16,119	\$11.23	\$21.23	Active Listening, Reading Comprehension, Speaking
Stock Clerks & Order Fillers	14,269	\$10.16	\$16.20	Speaking, Active Listening, Social Orientation
Janitors/Cleaners, Ex. Maids/Housekeepers	12,259	\$10.31	\$16.77	Active Listening, Coordination, Critical Thinking
Packers & Packers, Handlers	8,697	\$10.06	\$14.20	Monitoring, Active Listening, Coordination
Personal & Home Care Aides	8,467	\$10.45	\$12.52	Service Orientation, Social Perceptiveness, Active Listening

Source: IDES 2016 - 2026 Statewide Occupational Projections & IDES 2018 Statewide Occupational Wage Data

Using the list of occupations in Table 14, an analysis of academic year 2017 (the most recent available) program of study completers in Illinois indicates a clear trend - the higher the required level of education the more likely the occupations on the list have more completers in programs tracked by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). Conversely, the shortfall gap between projected annual openings and the number of completers widens as the level of required credential decreases. This is partially due to some training programs at those levels not reporting data to IBHE or ICCB, some training is primarily via apprenticeships, and some are truly done on-the-job, largely foregoing formal classroom training.

The following charts indicate the **Gap Ratio** for each of the occupations in Table 14 for which there is completer data provided by ICCB and IBHE. *The Gap Ratio is a proxy measure that indicates potential oversupply or undersupply of workers for a given occupation. Readers are cautioned to consider:*

1) annual completers are not the entire available supply of workers. For example, trade apprenticeships are not captured by IBHE and ICCB unless the trainee is enrolled in a post-secondary institution, nor are skill

2) the crosswalk between codes in the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) and Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) data sets is not exact.



A Gap Ratio value of 1.0 indicates the number of completers equals the number of projected annual openings. A value less than 1.0 indicates a potential undersupply and values more than 1.0 indicate a potential oversupply.

Chart 9

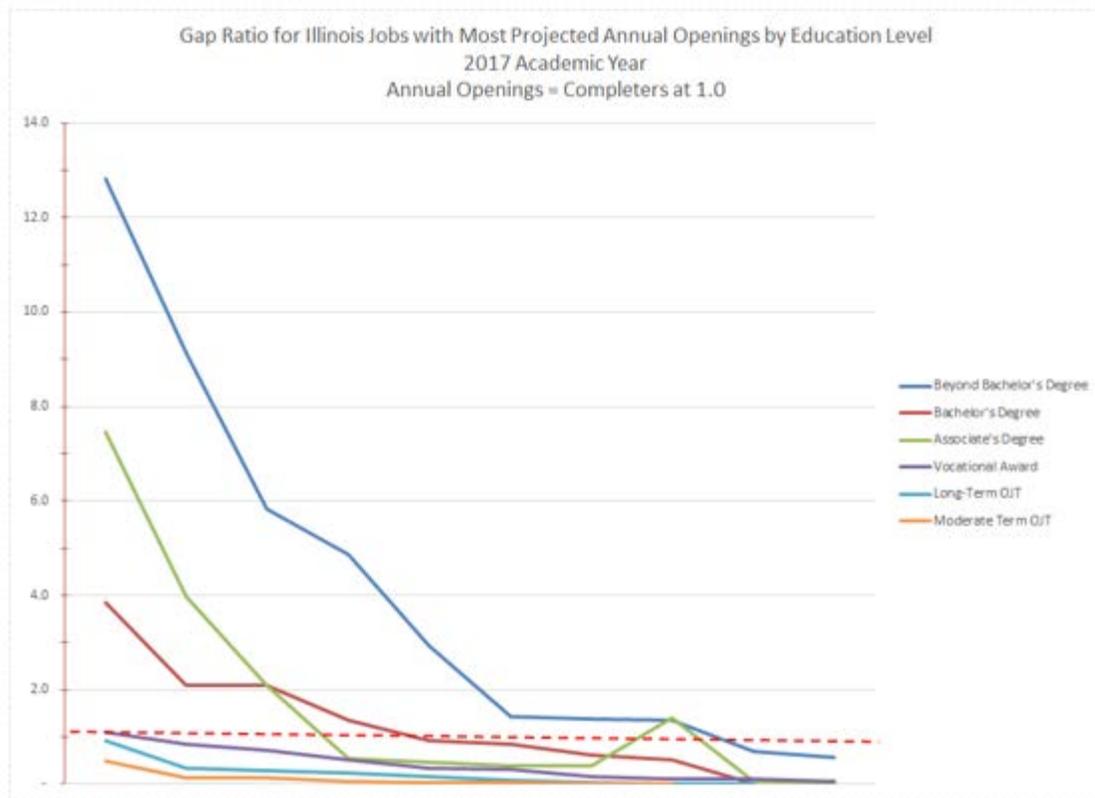
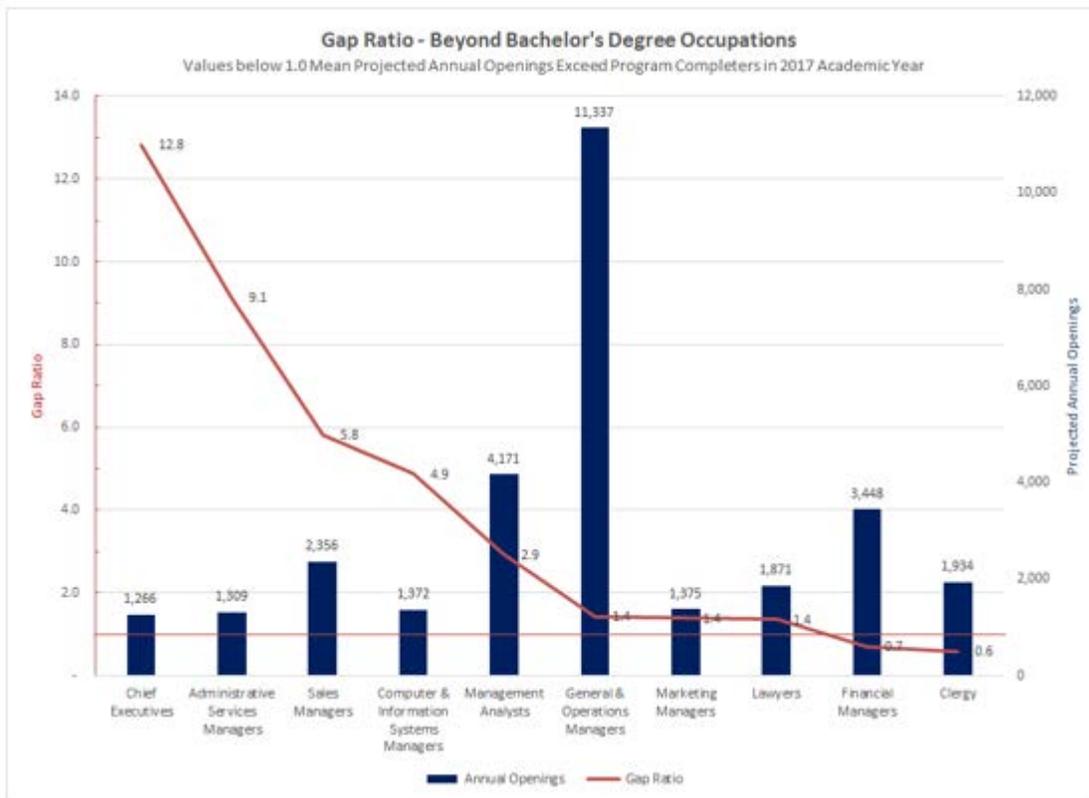


Chart 9 highlights that the top occupations for each level of education tend to have a greater shortage of completers as the required education level decreases. Note that at the lowest two levels, long-term and moderate-term OJT, none of the top occupations reach 1.0 – the point where the number of completers equals the number of annual openings. This is driven to a large extent by fewer training

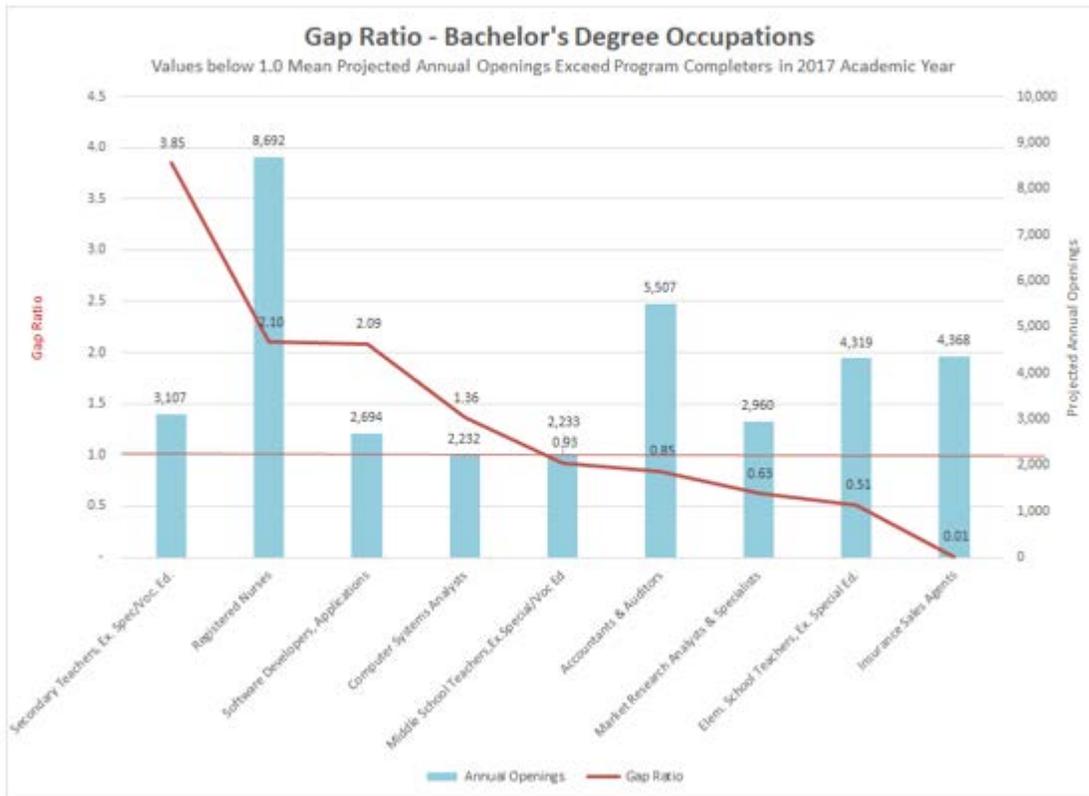
programs available (which limits the number of graduates) due to the hands-on training traditionally used for many of the occupations.

Chart 10



Eight of the top ten occupations have a surplus of completers, with five occupations having three or more times the number of projected openings.

Chart 11

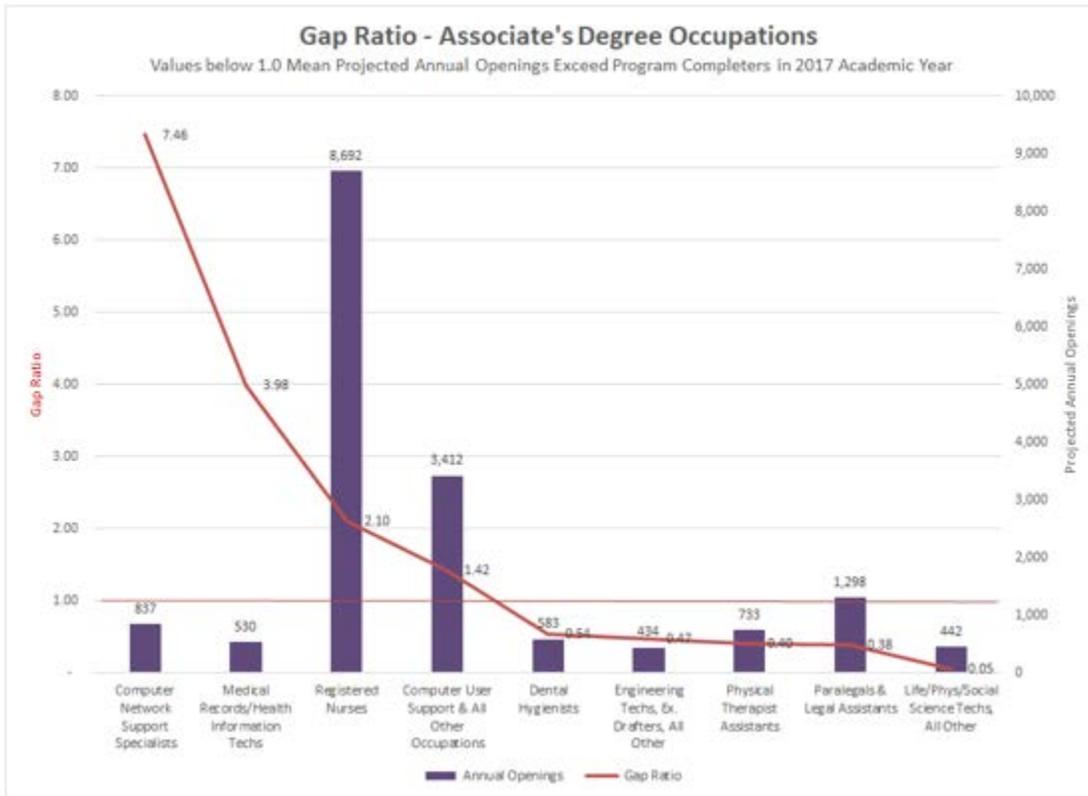


The data for occupations requiring a bachelor’s degree yields some interesting observations.

1. There is a generally accepted consensus that we have a national and statewide teacher shortage. However, for secondary education teachers, that cannot be attributed to a lack of people graduating from education programs. The most likely explanation is that many graduates from secondary education programs do not seek employment as teachers and elect to either continue their education or enter a non-education related career pathway. If secondary, middle school and elementary teachers are combined, the gap ratio for all three occupations is 1.7.
2. The programs of study and demand for registered nurses cut across educational levels (bachelor’s and associate’s degrees) which counts the same jobs and completers across different educational levels and points out a limitation of the data. Similar to the secondary education gap ratio, the raw data indicate a sufficient number of program completers to meet the demand for registered nurses. Regional shortages are likely driven by program completers not entering the job market due to pursuing additional education or by entering employment in another state.
3. The apparent shortage for Insurance Sales Agents is mainly attributable to there being very few programs of study specific to this occupation. While many insurance agents have a bachelor’s degree, all agents have licensing requirements, and educational institutions

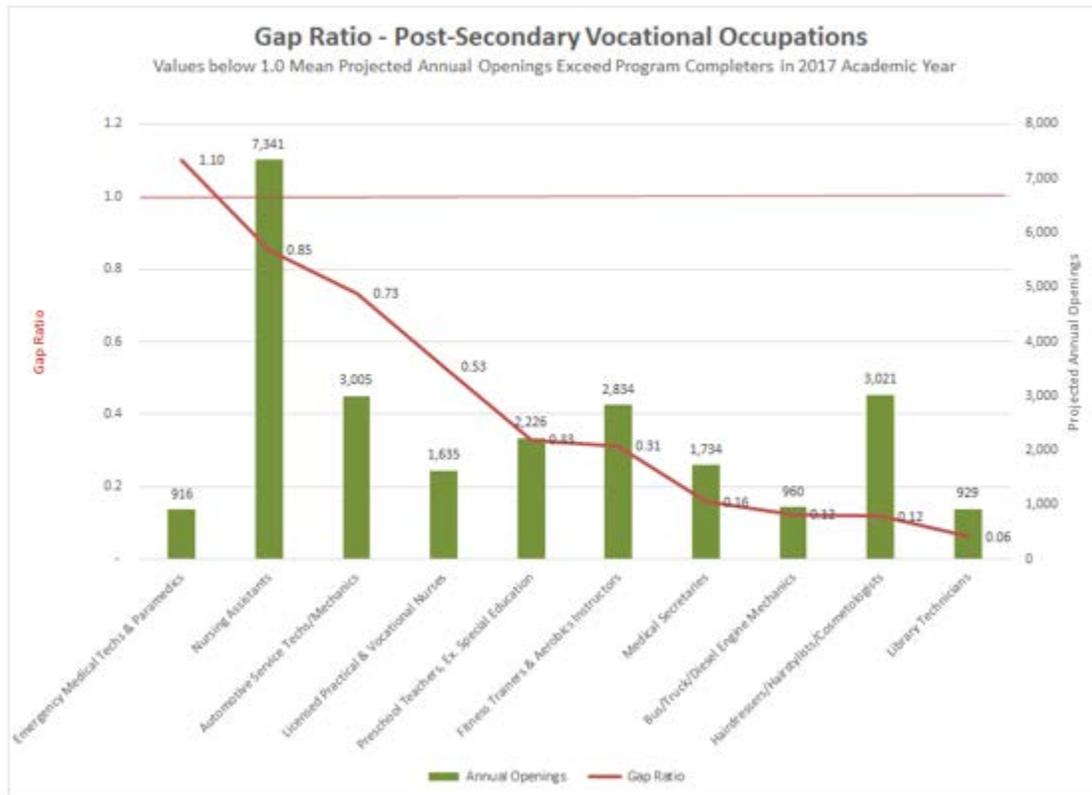
typically do not offer education or training related to licensure testing. The data indicates there were 35 graduates of insurance sales education or training statewide in the 2018 academic year.

Chart 12



For the Associate's Degree chart, note that the projected openings for registered nurses is the same as that shown in the Bachelor's Degree chart. This is due to the programs tied to nursing being co-mingled. Other than this anomaly, the chart indicates the number of completers for Computer Network Support Specialists and Medical Records/Health Information Technologists is in excess of the annual openings.

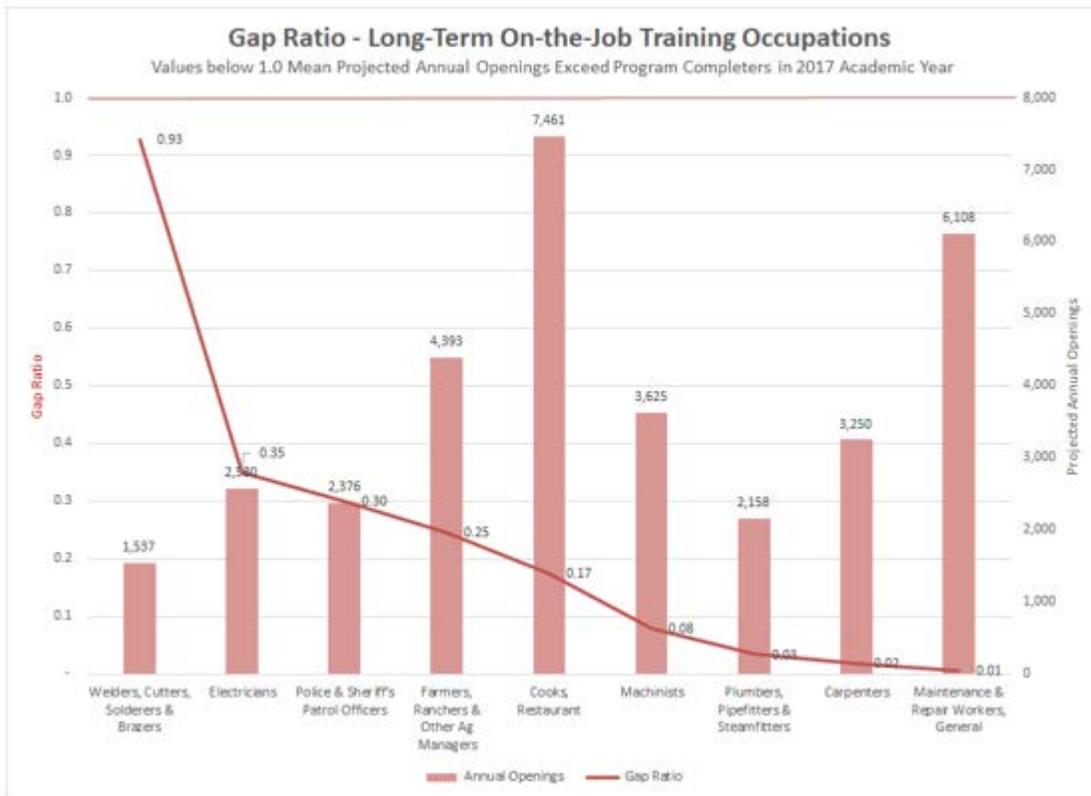
Chart 13



Caveats to consider for Post-Secondary Vocational Occupations include:

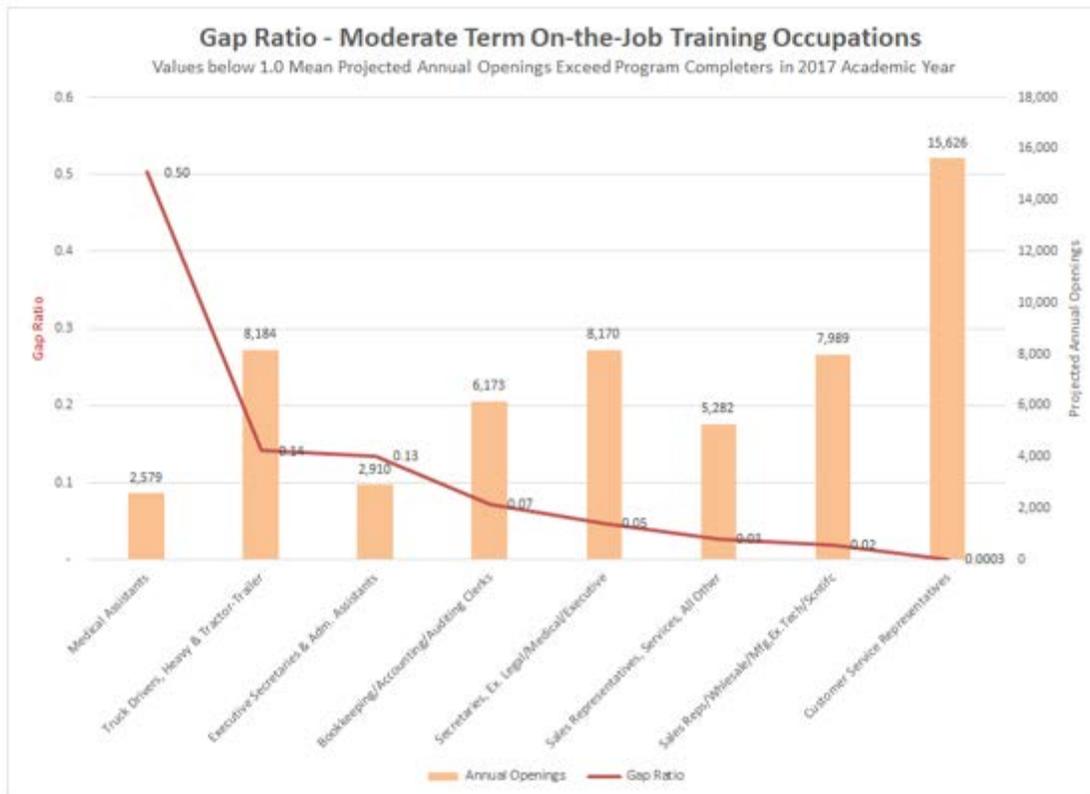
1. The number of completers for the top ten occupations in terms of projected openings is less than the demand. While completers do not make up the entire supply pool, the occupations with gap ratios of 0.5 or less are very likely to be experiencing a significant shortfall of skilled workers.
2. There is a very high attrition / turnover rate for Nursing Assistants, which elevates the number of annual openings for this occupation. Note the gap ratio indicates there are a significant number of completers. This is partially due to nursing assistant training being a prerequisite for registered nurse education. In some regions of Illinois, the high number of applicants for nursing assistant training creates a barrier for access to registered nursing training. Registered Nursing schools and employers should jointly consider a combination of strategies to simultaneously manage: 1) ensuring adequate access to training for individuals in the registered nurse pathway while also, 2) not creating a larger shortfall of nursing assistants who are in high demand and hospitals and long-term care facilities. Strategies to meet the projected demand for this occupation must include a thorough understanding of the root causes to develop effective measures to reduce the attrition rate.

Chart 14



As mentioned previously, there are education and training programs available in addition to those reporting through the IBHE and the ICCB, thus the supply shown on the long-term OJT chart is likely understated.

Chart 15



Again, there are education and training programs available in addition to those reporting through the IBHE and the ICCB, thus the supply shown on the moderate-term OJT chart is also likely understated.

⁷The reader is cautioned the margin of error for this data set varies widely and can be significant. For example, in 2018, the margin of error for inflow was 6% and 29% or 87,200 for the estimated outflow of 305,600. The reader is cautioned to use this data for providing overarching context and not become fixated on the exact numbers.

⁸<https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Featured%20Insights/Future%20of%20Organizations/The%20future%20of%20work%20in%20America%20People%20and%20places%20today%20and%20tomorrow/MGI-The-Future-of-Work-in-America-Report-July-2019.ashx>

2. Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis

A. The State’s Workforce Development Activities

Illinois’ WIOA Unified State Plan provides a vision of the integration of workforce, education and economic development policy as articulated in the Governor’s Action Agenda for EO3. Additionally, the WIOA Unified State Plan also serves as a federal compliance document for the United States Departments of Labor and Education under the federal WIOA. The Unified State Plan outlines the

vision, principles and goals for the integration of workforce, education and economic development programs for the State of Illinois.

State Workforce System

The Governor, Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) and WIOA core partners, including the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce), the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security), the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) determined that the state will submit a Unified State Plan. The state has developed this Unified State Plan with the intent to integrate the programs listed below (including the non-core programs) into the strategies outlined in the Unified State Plan.

- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
 - Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs
 - Employment and Training under the Community Services Block Grant Program
 - Trade Act Programs
 - Regional Economic Development
- Illinois Community College Board
 - Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
 - Career and Technical Education Programs at the postsecondary level supported under the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act
- Illinois Department of Employment Security
 - Wagner-Peyser Employment Services including Labor Market Information
 - Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers Monitor Advocate System
 - Veterans Employment and Training Services
 - Unemployment Insurance Services
 - Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Illinois Department of Human Services
 - Rehabilitation Services for Individuals with Disabilities
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Illinois Department on Aging
 - Senior Community Services Employment Program
- Illinois Department of Corrections

- Section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007
- Nationally Directed - Locally Administered Programs
 - National Farmworker Jobs Program
 - YouthBuild
 - Job Corps

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce)

Commerce is the state agency that leads economic development efforts for Illinois and is responsible for the WIOA Title IB activities. Key program activities include the distribution of WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth formula funds, Trade Act funds and National Dislocated Worker Grants to 22 Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs), monitoring the local areas' use of WIOA funds, and providing technical assistance to local areas. Commerce is responsible for the administration of the required and allowed Governor's Statewide Workforce Activities as outlined in WIOA. As the designated entity, Commerce issues formal guidance on behalf of the IWIB, as well as specific guidance to the Title I entities. Commerce also provides staff support to the IWIB and its committees, ad hoc task forces and policy work groups. In 2017, Commerce created a new staff position to support the expanded duties of the IWIB. This position has the primary responsibility to provide staff support to the IWIB, particularly to its chair and executive committee. As part of the Bureau of Community Development, Commerce also oversees the employment and training programs under the Community Services Block Grant Program.

The Department has oversight of the Equal Opportunity (EO) provisions of Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act for Title I programs administered throughout Illinois' twenty-two local workforce innovation areas. In 2017, the Deputy Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity began working closely with the EO offices from the other core partner programs to ensure coordinated efforts among all EO Officers. This is an effort to minimize the potential for duplicative services at the regional and local level, while maximizing the expertise of each office and the unique challenges of their specific programs.

Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)

The ICCB has the responsibility of overseeing WIOA Title II activities under the Adult Education and Literacy Act. Services include, but are not limited to, assessment, basic skills instruction, English language acquisition instruction, high school equivalency instruction, career awareness, workforce preparation, online instruction, bridge programs and accelerated education and training programs. Nearly 1.1 million of Illinois' 12.8 million adults have less than 12 grades of formal education. Included in this number are 437,833 adults with less than a 9th grade education. Furthermore, approximately 2.8 million Illinois residents speak a language other than English as the primary language in their home, and more than 342,649 immigrants are currently residing in Illinois. The ICCB seeks to prepare adult learners to be competitive in the ever-evolving employment landscape by building and supporting an educational system inclusive of adults throughout all aspects of their basic literacy, English as a Second Language, Citizenship, employability skills and workforce development.

The ICCB also administers Postsecondary Perkins funds. In fiscal year 2018, statewide, Career and Technical Education (CTE) credit program enrollments accounted for more than one-quarter of all credit students (25.2 percent). Career and Technical Education accounted for the largest number of graduates (40,913) with nearly two-thirds of earned degrees and certificates in CTE programs during fiscal year 2018 (63.3 percent). During fiscal year 2018 and 2019, 225 new CTE programs were approved to meet workforce demands. In Illinois, federal Perkins Title I funds are divided between the secondary and postsecondary career and technical education systems where administration is shared between the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and ICCB. The 57 Education for Employment (EFE) regions receive funds from ISBE to support secondary CTE programs, and the 39 community college districts receive funds from ICCB to support postsecondary CTE programs.

The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V), which amended the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, was signed into law on July 31, 2018. The purpose of the Act is to develop more fully the academic, career, and technical skills of secondary and postsecondary students who elect to enroll in career and technical education programs. The new law maintains a commitment to driving improvement through programs of study, a comprehensive local needs assessment that requires data-driven decision-making on local spending and involves significant stakeholder consultation and focuses on innovation and modernization and accountability. The law also significantly changes the process for setting performance targets, shifts accountability indicators and focuses on the disaggregation of data by maintaining the required disaggregation by student populations. The intent of Illinois' postsecondary CTE is to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in the global economy. Career and technical education equips students with foundational knowledge regarding a cluster of occupations and careers. As a student evolves through their educational experience, their focus is narrowed to a particular program. This process allows students to transition seamlessly while providing them with hands-on exploration, rigorous academics and the support necessary to succeed.

Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security)

Employment Security is responsible for administering Title III activities for employment services under the Wagner-Peyser Act. The intention of Wagner-Peyser services is to sustain economic growth by meeting the needs of job seekers and employers, to increase awareness of resource providers and to expand employment opportunities. Services offered include assessments for job placement, job search assistance, and online job application processing. Employment Security is responsible for increasing community awareness about the services provided via job fairs, community collaborations, onsite recruitments, resource linkage and presentations to both job seekers and employers. Additionally, Employment Security is responsible for labor market and career information in Illinois through cooperative agreements with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to provide statewide and sub-state employment, unemployment, occupation, wage information and statewide and sub-state industry and occupational employment projections. These data products serve as the cornerstone for the Career Information System, a web-based tool for students and job seekers to identify Illinois' in-demand jobs and to make informed choices about future career pathways.

In addition to Wagner-Peyser Title III activities, the Illinois Department of Employment Security is responsible for administering four other workforce programs: Unemployment Insurance; Job

Counseling, Training and Placement Services for Veterans; Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA); and the Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Program.

The Unemployment Insurance program is designated to contribute to the state's overall economic stability by partially protecting eligible workers against loss of income during periods of unemployment. Eligible workers who become unemployed and meet all requirements set forth in the UI Act may receive benefits for the maximum number of weeks payable under the law or until the worker finds employment or becomes otherwise ineligible.

The Job Counseling, Training, and Placement Services for Veterans program ensures priority of service to Veterans over all other job applicants, actively promotes and develops employment opportunities, and provides placement and vocational guidance services, specifically for those Veterans who have significant barriers to employment. Additional information regarding priority of service for Veterans may be found at <https://www.doleta.gov/programs/VETS/>.

Trade Readjustment Assistance, a benefit under the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, provides income support to persons who have exhausted unemployment insurance compensation and whose jobs were affected by foreign imports.

The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program provides staff-assisted services, including job development, career guidance, and referrals to training and supportive services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) administers Title IV activities and is the state's lead agency serving individuals with disabilities. DRS works in partnership with individuals with disabilities and their families to assist them in making informed choices to achieve full community participation through employment, education and independent living opportunities. The primary focus of the vocational rehabilitation program is to assist individuals with significant disabilities in obtaining and retaining competitive integrated employment. Vocational rehabilitation services are designed to prepare an individual for employment through an individualized planning process. DRS staff also provide assistance to workforce partners in the area of program accessibility and assistive technology.

Department of Human Services' Division of Family & Community Services

The Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Family & Community Services is also the state administrator of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. TANF is a time-limited cash assistance program for families meeting eligibility rules. DHS operates Family Community Resource Centers (FCRC) statewide serving TANF customers on the pathway to self-sufficiency. TANF customers are evaluated and assessed for suitability for employment and training programs. TANF customers are also assessed to determine barriers and barrier reduction service needs. These issues may be related to substance abuse, mental health and domestic violence. The FCRC identifies the customer's needs to create a Responsibility and Service Plan (RSP), which is a guide to services. The RSP contains employment and training needs, supportive service needs (e.g.,

transportation and uniforms) and childcare. Most TANF customers are also eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and medical assistance.

The Department of Human Services' Division of Family & Community Services has a strong presence in Comprehensive One-Stop Centers and is committed to increasing workforce engagement with collaborative partnerships to achieve employment opportunities for all adults served by DHS. A taskforce has been created to strategically move through the process of ensuring service integration among Partners in the one-stop centers. Staff located in the Comprehensive One-Stop Centers are trained to assist customers utilizing the online TANF/SNAP/Medical application through the Application for Benefits Eligibility System (ABE), which is accessible through Illinois workNet. To streamline the referral process, DHS is actively involved in cross-training sessions at the one-stop centers to enhance awareness of services and resources provided onsite.

Illinois Department on Aging

The mission of the Illinois Department on Aging (Aging) is to serve and advocate for older Illinoisans and their caregivers by administering quality and culturally appropriate programs that promote partnerships and encourage independence, dignity and quality of life. In accordance with the federal [Older American's Act regulations](#), Aging has divided Illinois into 13 Planning and Service Areas (PSAs). The 13 PSAs in Illinois are each managed and served by an Area Agency on Aging. Aging works in partnership with these agencies: 12 not-for-profit corporations and one unit of local government, the City of Chicago. Area Agencies on Aging (Area Agencies) have the primary task of planning and coordinating services and programs for older people in their respective areas. The Area Agencies receive funding from Aging based on a formula that takes into consideration the number of older citizens and minorities in that area, as well as the number living in poverty, in rural areas and alone. Like Aging, Area Agencies are not, as a rule, direct service providers. Area Agencies contract with local agencies, which provide services to the older citizens who live in the same community.

The role of Aging under WIOA is to ensure the needs of older workers and job seekers are considered so that these individuals remain employed for as long as they wish. Age is often a barrier to finding employment, and Aging's resources can be leveraged to help older citizens find and retain employment. As a partner program, Aging has the role of administering the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) under Title V of the Older Americans Act. The SCSEP program provides on-the-job training, resources and referrals for all individuals 55+ years of age that will ultimately lead to unsubsidized employment.

Illinois Department of Corrections

The mission of the Illinois Department of Corrections (Corrections) is to serve justice in Illinois and increase public safety by promoting positive change in offender behavior, operating successful reentry programs and reducing victimization. Corrections administers the Department of Justice (Bureau of Justice Assistance) Second Chance Act Grant, which allows governments and communities to coordinate reentry efforts, enhance existing housing and support services, engage in evidence-based practices and create innovative strategies that will serve the growing needs of this population, ultimately increasing public safety and reducing recidivism.

Nationally Directed/Locally Administered Programs

There are a number of nationally directed workforce programs that are administered in some of the regions and LWIAs in Illinois. These programs, where present, will be included in the regional and local workforce plans.

National Farmworker Jobs Program

The National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) provides employment and training services that are targeted to migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs). The program partners with community organizations and state agencies to counter the chronic unemployment and underemployment experienced by farmworkers who depend primarily on jobs in agricultural labor performed across the country. NFJP partners with the state monitor advocate to provide outreach services to farmworkers and their families. NFJP provides career services and training to eligible farmworkers, and coordinates with the One-Stop Delivery System. The National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grant awards are determined by a formula that estimates, by state, the relative demand for NFJP services.

YouthBuild

The United States Department of Labor grants funds directly to the local YouthBuild program through an annual competitive process. YouthBuild is a community-based alternative education program that provides job training and educational opportunities for at-risk youth ages 16-24. Youth learn construction skills while constructing or rehabilitating affordable housing for low-income or homeless families in their own neighborhoods. Youth split their time between the construction site and the classroom, where they earn their GED or high school diploma, learn to be community leaders and prepare for college and other post-secondary training opportunities. YouthBuild includes significant support systems, such as mentoring, follow-up education, employment and personal counseling services and participation in community service and civic engagement.

Job Corps

Job Corps is an education and vocational training program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that helps young people ages 16 through 24 improve the quality of their lives through vocational and academic training. Job Corps' mission is to attract eligible young people, teach them the skills they need to become employable and independent and place them in meaningful jobs or further education. Job Corps centers are operated for the U.S. Department of Labor by private companies through competitive contracting processes, and by other federal agencies through interagency agreements. For more information regarding the Job Corps Program in Illinois please visit: https://www.doleta.gov/job_corps/directory/region5.cfm.

State Workforce Development Activities

Illinois workforce development and economic development communities are developing and implementing strategies that place a new focus on increasing the state's competitiveness. Governor Pritzker's EO3 and the subsequent Action Agenda are driving stronger collaborations that are coalescing around statewide goals and are providing a mechanism to compile and assess activities that have supported -- and will continue to support -- the strategies developed in the report. Some of those strategies and some exemplary associated activities are listed here:

Identify high-impact regional clusters and associated in-demand occupations:

- Illinois' Eligible Training Provider policy defines the method for choosing demand occupations. The current set of demand occupations was developed in 2009 using criteria that consider regional demand (entry wage and average job openings), statewide demand, whether the occupation is on the Illinois Career Pathways Career Clusters list, designation as a priority occupation, and evidence supporting regional need. Based on these criteria, 533 occupations are on the current demand occupation list of at least one Economic Development Region. Most of the occupations are on the list because they are included in a career cluster.

Implement coordinated workforce development strategies around regional clusters:

- A regional business-led sector strategy focused on aerospace – the Rockford Area Aerospace Network (RAAN) – has been developed in the Northern Stateline region centered on Rockford. RAAN brings together the region's Tier 1 aerospace companies, many of their regional suppliers, regional economic development organizations, and education and training providers at all levels. While RAAN responds to a range of industry concerns, it emphasizes talent pipeline development that feeds all levels of industry employment needs, from factory floor production and maintenance to product design, engineering, and development.

Strengthen workforce development in all parts of the state:

- The Calumet Area Industrial Commission (CAIC) is working with its advanced manufacturing company members and others in the southern part of Chicago/Cook County to develop a regional talent development supply chain, regional partnership, and management metrics. These efforts include support for on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, and apprenticeship programs.

Increase apprenticeship opportunities

- In 2017, Accenture, AON, and Zurich North America established the Chicago Apprenticeship Network to team up with community colleges and Chicago-based non-profits to design apprenticeship programs in information technology, insurance, and human resources. Since then, Accenture has grown its program from five to 27 apprentices, with many becoming permanent, full-time employees. AON has hired 25 apprentices per year since 2016. Zurich, whose apprentices are considered full-time employees from day one, has also hired about 25 per year. All three companies aim to diversify their workforce through their apprenticeship programs. Students earn an Associate of Applied Science degree and an industry-recognized DOL Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion in their field while gaining on-the-job work experience. Today this employer-led apprenticeship network has grown to include more than 20 companies all working to design their own apprenticeship programs. The Network's goal is 1,000 apprentices by 2020.
- In early 2019, Commerce funded 10 organizations to serve as apprenticeship intermediaries, navigators, or both to expand existing and create new apprenticeship programs. This investment is modeled after the experience of other states in using apprenticeship navigators and intermediaries. For example, since hiring five apprenticeship navigators in 2016,

Maryland has added 47 new programs, reactivated 23 programs, and approved 265 occupations (110 of which currently have active apprentices) and 6 pre-apprenticeship programs. South Carolina has six full-time navigators who were instrumental in increasing the number of active apprentices from 800 in 2007 to over 17,000 by 2017. These states also enacted \$1,000 tax credits as an incentive to employ apprentices.

- ICCB was recently awarded a \$3.9M DOL Scaling Apprenticeships Through Sector-Based Strategies grant. Over the next four years, ten community colleges will offer pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships in the Information Technology sector through what is being called the Customized Apprenticeship Programming-Information Technology (CAP-IT). This collaborative effort will utilize Jobs For the Future (JFF) to promote large-scale expansion of apprenticeships across the nation along with CompTIA and other employers.
- ICCB recently completed a pilot survey with community colleges to identify the depth and breadth of community college apprenticeships. This has provided a baseline for ICCB to take a closer look at community college apprenticeships and refine the survey as appropriate. Additionally, ICCB captures those students identified as being in apprenticeships.

Address barriers to successful training and employment

- The Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Program is a partnership between the Illinois Departments of Corrections, Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Employment Security, Human Services, and the Illinois Community College Board to reduce recidivism by providing life skills, career readiness, and occupational training to inmates prior to release. Since 2017, 233 inmates have participated in essential skills training, cognitive behavior therapy, high school equivalency/GED courses (if applicable), technical education, work experience within the institution, and job search. To date, 16 inmates have graduated with a welding certificate from Black Hawk Community College and are employed in their home communities. A recent study by the Government Performance Lab of the Harvard Kennedy School identified four practices of high performing career and technical education programs operating within correctional systems: offering demand-driven courses and merging resources across state workforce agencies; building programs around nationally recognized certifications; targeting limited seats to the right students; and fostering direct communication with employers.
- The St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department is working with Southern Illinois University's Head Start/Early Head Start program in Edwardsville to fill early childhood development associate positions by developing a career pathway for parents who use Head Start services. St. Clair County government manages an apprenticeship program that offers participating parents a job and a credential, and St. Clair County encourages them to continue their education by using federal workforce funding to obtain an associate degree.
- More than 100,000 individuals in Illinois participating in the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) are able-bodied adults without dependents. Connecting these individuals to workforce training keeps them eligible for their benefits while they address their barriers to employability, but there are far fewer training opportunities than people who

need them. Lessons learned from the State's recent EPIC (Employment Opportunities, Personalized Services, Individualized Training, and Career Planning) pilot that assisted underemployed and unemployed SNAP recipients in five Illinois regions will be useful in connecting these individuals to career preparation activities while they receive needed public assistance.

- The Illinois Department of Human Services: Rehabilitation Services' partnership with the University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign's E3 (Educate, Empower and Employ) project identifies and serves young adults with disabilities who have been arrested, spent time in jail or prison, or who are aging out of foster care. E3 provides training to help community agencies identify and connect people with disabilities with Vocational Rehabilitation services. E3 has helped provide services to 164 individuals who are in foster care or recently aged out, 78 ex-offenders under 25 years of age, and 374 ex-offenders who are 25 or older.
- Illinois is a national leader in Integrated Education and Training (IET), an adult educational strategy that primarily assists those without a high school diploma, English language learners, or those with basic skills deficiency with goal-oriented, relevant, practical knowledge. IET combines adult education basic skills with career and technical education training designed to provide college credit and industry-recognized credentials. This approach can offset the opportunity costs of education for individuals with family and work responsibilities by offering education leading to educational and economic mobility. For example, several community colleges serving large communities of English language learners have redesigned their curriculum to teach career and technical education concurrently and contextually leading to an industry-recognized certificate.

Establish and support equity goals

- The Illinois Science and Technology Institute connects professionals in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields with high school classrooms through its Mentor Matching Engine, a web platform that offers high quality mentoring experiences that overcome geographic barriers.
- The Greater Oak Brook Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with other local business and educational organizations, matched young STEM business leaders with 40 students from a culturally and economically diverse high school. The young business leaders and high school students participated in eight weeks of STEM simulations. Pre and post-survey results showed a significant increase in the students' appreciation for the importance of essential workplace readiness skills.
- The State's CTE Plan identifies goals to creating an educated and skilled workforce. With equity being a tenet of the Plan, equity metrics are incorporated into each goal. Similarly, ICCB supports continuous quality improvement processes that assist colleges in developing, implementing and evaluating CTE programs of study with a specific focus on equity.
- Local workforce boards and employers are required partners within local Perkins plans. Local Perkins recipients must complete the Local Comprehensive Needs Assessment every two

years. This assessment informs how Perkins funding will be spent in a specific region or local area, guiding equity-driven decision-making.

Shorten the time from credential to employment

- The enhancement of dual credit around the state has created opportunities for high schools and colleges to partner to accelerate the time in which students can earn credentials and degrees. As an example, Heartland Community College and the District 5 high school in Normal, Illinois, partnered to create an information technology career pathway that enables students to graduate from high school with a diploma and an associate degree in information technology.
- Community colleges and universities in Illinois can award credit for prior learning if individuals can demonstrate they have achieved the objectives for one or more specific courses. Specific statewide policies are in place to award academic credit for military training. The State's CTE Plan emphasizes the importance of accelerating pathways for veterans and others by expanding prior learning assessment and competency-based education. Many institutions have already begun to explore or implement CBE style programs by becoming Entitled Institutions to offer Gateway Credentials for Early Childhood programs.
- Illinois was selected to participate in the National Governors Association's State Collaborative Consortium to Understand and Support the On-Demand Workforce. Participation in this initiative will help Illinois identify ways to build the skills and knowledge that self-employed workers need to compete in the on-demand economy and develop socially responsible mechanisms for employers to leverage this talent.
- The *Illinois Postsecondary Profiles* is a data and accountability website initiative scheduled for release in fall 2019 resulting from an intergovernmental agreement between ICCB, IBHE, and Northern Illinois University (NIU). The central vision guiding development of the Illinois Postsecondary Profiles (IPP) is the creation of a powerful but accessible website through which interested stakeholders can access data pertinent to the Illinois Career and Technical Education, Associate Degree, Baccalaureate, and Graduate postsecondary experience for both the 2-year and 4-year sectors in meaningful and useful ways. The user interface of the IPP employs an innovative approach that is designed around user interests and will allow exploration of the data along one of three distinct paths that should significantly enhance and simplify the experience. The user will have the choice of searching by institutions that meet a certain set of criteria, searching based on their research or career interest area, or searching for information about the experiences of particular kinds of people. The full version of the tool will draw from mainly local agency data, making it more current, more detailed and more flexible than other postsecondary data tools.
- The *Illinois Community College Board Online Directory of Programs* web tool released in spring 2019 allows stakeholders to search all programs offered by the 48 community colleges in Illinois. The Directory includes information on programs in Career and Technical Education, Associate Degree, and Adult Basic/Secondary Education & English as a Second Language. The program information is searchable by community college and/or area of study

and includes program title, credential type, program length in credit hours, unique college prefix and number, program approval date, and nationally standardized classification of instructional programs (CIP code) taxonomy for ease of program comparison. The tool helps inform prospective students and various stakeholders, such as employers on availability of programs to meet individual and workforce need.

- Illinois has launched a new centralized data portal for prospective Illinois college students that compiles information on graduation rates, costs, student debt and, for the first time, potential career earnings of graduates of the state's two- and four-year institutions. The Illinois College2Career website features information from more than 100 public and private colleges on subjects including basic tuition and financial aid, program offerings and popular career paths for certain graduates.
- The Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) enables seven state agencies to link early childhood, education and workforce data over time to better understand program effectiveness and anticipate future education and workforce needs. ILDS can deepen our understanding of the education and employment outcomes of Illinois learners and citizens. Examples include:
 - How many Illinois children do the state's early childhood programs serve, and what is the impact of these programs on later learning?
 - Are high school graduates prepared to succeed in community colleges and four-year universities?
 - What are the employment outcomes for college graduates and completers of various workforce-training programs?
- The Economic Information and Analysis Division (EI&A) of the Illinois Department of Employment Security has primary responsibility for the development and dissemination of workforce and labor market information in Illinois. Through broad public/non-public sector partnerships, EI&A has been generating workforce outcomes data on:
 - Growth industry sectors (construction, manufacturing, information technology and healthcare);
 - 75,000 completers of training programs, including dislocated workers and youth;
 - 320,000 post-secondary graduates (2010-2014) in nearly 110 private and public two-year and four-year colleges;
 - Nearly two million high school seniors (2003-2016) representing all 852 Illinois public school districts;
 - More than 28,000 formerly incarcerated individuals.
- The Illinois Employment Business System (IEBS) is a new cloud-based software platform being developed by Commerce. IEBS is an example of a smart and predictive tool that provides quality workforce information and layoff tracking data from multiple sources to help avert layoffs and promote economic and workforce development. This system is easy to

access and understand, enabling users to quickly locate real-time Dun & Bradstreet global business data, IDES labor market information, and State and local workforce layoff tracking data. IEBS may be accessed by smart phone, tablet, or laptop, providing current on-the-fly dashboards, analytic tools, and industry cluster information.

Integrate workforce services for job seekers

- The IWIB adopted a service integration policy in 2018 that is being implemented in all Illinois workforce areas. This policy provides a detailed description of how service integration strengthens the operation and effectiveness of the State's network of one-stop centers. A self-assessment guide has been developed that lays out a process for one-stop centers to use in collaborating with partners to agree on a baseline of service integration for seven goals identified as priorities by the IWIB. Pilot LWIAs tested out the self-assessment process, and lessons learned will be integrated into professional development, released as best practices or turned into new or revised policy.
- Through the Service Integration Workgroup, training sessions have been held along with webinars to engage and inform all partners in Illinois' workforce system as we move from pilot to full implementation. This self-assessment will be administered annually to determine progress and identify improvement targets.

Give employers easy access to the skilled workforce they need

- The federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is available to employers who hire and retain veterans, mature workers, people with disabilities, formerly incarcerated individuals, veterans and youth. Employers claim about \$1 billion in tax credits each year under the WOTC program, and there is no limit on the number of individuals an employer can hire to qualify for this tax credit.
- The Employer Training Investment Program (ETIP) supports Illinois workers' efforts to upgrade their skills so they can remain current in new technologies and business practices. Employers must match training funds received from the ETIP program.

Workforce development, education and training activities in Illinois have been transforming for some time. This transformation will accelerate as WIOA services continue to align and integrate across partner programs at the local, state and regional levels, and will ensure the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), led by its business members, is the primary force behind state workforce activities. In late 2016, the IWIB began developing the framework for a strategic plan that details the Board's major objectives in leading the workforce system. The Board approved a vision and mission statement along with nine guiding principles aligned with the Unified State Plan to ensure members maintain focus on the course established. These are highlighted in more detail within the State Workforce Board section of this plan.

Illinois has strongly advocated and supported the alignment of efforts towards in-demand industries, occupations and skills. The intent is to firmly link education and training to the skills identified by businesses, ensuring that all program completers have acquired appropriate skills when they enter the workforce. Additionally, Illinois promotes comprehensive career services that enable individuals to

make informed decisions on education and training opportunities and maximize individual potential for successful and rewarding careers, including those with development disabilities, low-skilled adults and other targeted populations. The state will work to develop policies and incentives to support the strategies and activities as outlined in this plan.

The fundamental approach to workforce development in Illinois is captured in our Vision Statement, jointly adopted by all WIOA partners:

“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.”

Illinois is focused on a variety of strategies and activities including:

- Coordinating Demand-Driven Strategic Planning at the State and Regional Levels
- Providing data and tools to support regional planning to align education, workforce and economic development strategies
- Conducting outreach to regional and local economic development organizations to improve regional collaboration in economic development planning
- Aligning and integrating business and job seeker services among the programs along with state and regional economic development partners
- Providing Career Pathways for Economic Advancement
- Exploring ways to fully mainstream targeted populations into sector-based career pathway initiatives ensuring equitable access and the opportunity for full participation (see the section on “Targeted Populations”)
- Creating new pathways for success by preparing skills-deficient adults to take advantage of sector-based bridge programs
- Coordinating and Enhancing Career Services and Case Management
- Establishing case management teams to coordinate and support the delivery of enhanced case management services to participants across programs
- Supporting awareness of the benefits of work-based learning strategies for businesses, jobseekers and students
- Promoting continuous improvement in career services and case management through the identification of best practice models and incentivizing demonstration projects
- Promoting expanded use of labor market information by employers and job seekers that will allow them to promote and access job openings, review changing labor market trends, and identify education and training programs
- Supporting awareness and adoption of innovative private-sector models, such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Talent Pipeline Management Initiative

- Improving the Public-Private Data Infrastructure
- Working with core partners and the State of Illinois Chief Information Officer to develop a framework to integrate state intake, case management and reporting systems
- Expanding and improving the state education and workforce longitudinal data system to support the six strategies
- Expanding pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships in all sectors to meet employers' needs for a well-trained workforce and to give individuals the skills to compete and be successful in the world of work

WIOA Implementation & Coordination

Under WIOA, the Illinois Workforce System began an evolutionary process that is already accelerating. This evolution is grounded in a new emphasis on inter-agency collaboration, data-driven strategies and continuous improvement through rigorous, ongoing analysis and evaluation. One of the state's immediate activities after the launch of WIOA was to foster improved communication and collaboration between core partners and other key stakeholders to establish a solid foundation for service integration. The following are representative examples of coordinated workforce development activities undertaken or planned.

Interagency Work Group evolution

WIOA Core Partner program administrators began meeting in May 2015 as the "Interagency Work Group". Since then the group split into a "WIOA Leadership Team" group comprised of Illinois Core Partner program senior leadership, and the "WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team" (TA Team) comprised of designated Core Partner senior program staff. The WIOA Leadership group meets quarterly to review and discuss high level, strategic issues while the TA Team continues to meet monthly to review and address new and ongoing program implementation issues. All meetings of these groups are supported by highly structured agendas designed to maintain clarity at the state-level regarding integration and alignment under WIOA.

The TA Team is responsible for developing field guidance and reviewing and approving One-Stop Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), including annual infrastructure funding agreements and WIOA regional and local plans. Additionally, the team drafts the Governor's Guidelines for local MOU development and any supplemental communications. This team also reviews and addresses implementation issues raised by local staff, and it conducts – on behalf of the State -- remediation with individual LWIAs to address issues, concentrating on those that could lead to an impasse. The team may make policy recommendations to appropriate Core Partner staff in response to WIOA implementation issues or opportunities raised by field staff in the local workforce innovation areas. By virtue of participating on the TA Team, members also serve on many of the other WIOA committees and workgroups.

Economic Information and Analysis

The Illinois Department of Employment Security provides statewide and sub-state occupational employment projections to assist local workforce areas, along with other partners, to determine in-

demand occupations and plan education and training curricula. The Interagency Work Group established an Interagency Data Team to develop comprehensive data reports that will be used in the state and regional plans. The Data Team will continue to work with the regional planning teams to provide additional data as needed. For the regions to be able to access labor market information that is specifically tied to the WIOA regional plans, the team will work on developing a vehicle to access this specific information on whichever platform is utilized for the state. Currently, Employment Security provides labor market information on the Employment Security website in a variety of formats including the Illinois Virtual Labor Market Information System (VLMI) that is supported by the DOL Workforce Information Grant and that is a required deliverable for all states.

Staff from the core WIOA partners also worked on a proof-of-concept pilot project to analyze outcomes for certain community college program completers. This talent flow analysis led to a successful evaluation of where graduates found employment and identified wage differentials based on industry and locale. The project led to the US Chamber of Commerce posting a summary analysis and a technical how-to guide online to share with communities involved in its Talent Pipeline Management Initiative.

Workforce Education Strategic Planning

The ICCB worked with state and local partners in the development of a statewide Workforce Education Strategic Plan (WESP). Currently, ICCB has developed surveys that will be shared with the Presidents Council and be completed by the community colleges. The surveys are linked to the Strategic Directions (below) in the WESP and will inform ICCB regarding community college employer engagement, among other topics. Additionally, the results will be shared with stakeholders across the workforce and education systems and with the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board to ensure that various entities can utilize the information to strengthen the workforce system's ability to effectively respond to the business community.

WESP Strategic Directions:

- Strategic Direction 1: Increase Early Career-Related Education and Exposure
- Strategic Direction 2: Address Essential and Occupational Skill Gaps
- Strategic Direction 3: Align Education and Training Programs to Employers' Needs
- Strategic Direction 4: Strengthen Connections among Public Partners and Engagement and Alignment with Business

Technical Assistance and Professional Development

Illinois continues to coordinate technical assistance and professional development activities to support the priorities outlined in this plan. The CAP-IT Initiative -- utilizing the DOL Scaling Apprenticeships through Sector Based Strategies grant -- has at its core a strong professional development component designed to engage the community colleges and their partners in understanding employers' needs and how to recruit and work with them to build apprenticeships that meet the needs of employers. Professional development will be conducted by leading community colleges, major IT corporations and national entities, such as Jobs For the Future.

In FY2020, the ICCB reestablished the Transitions Academy to assist colleges and partnerships working on developing Bridge and ICAPS (Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System) programs by increasing awareness of the expanding partnership between Adult Education and Career and Technical Education as it relates to the IET/ICAPS models, Illinois Bridge programs, and Illinois Programs of Study. The ICCB goals include increasing skills, competencies and credentials of adult education and college students using information by industry and employers. Building on the ICCB goals, the vision of the Transitions Academy is to smooth the transition for all students into and through postsecondary education, contribute to the economic development of Illinois by providing robust workforce training, increasing credential attainment, and closing the skills gap through talent pipeline management. As a result, there will be multiple entry points – for both well-prepared students and targeted populations.

WIOA State Summit

Throughout 2017, representatives from all core partners jointly planned and, in October, executed a gathering of over 500 WIOA program leaders and staff to share best practices and lessons learned on implementation issues. Attendees heard a unifying message of collaboration from the IWIB chairman, the WIOA state agency directors and program leaders. The event also covered topics such as: integrated business engagement, working with economic development groups, overviews of sector strategies and talent pipeline management, and exploring why businesses are fond of Registered Apprenticeships. There were four plenary sessions and over a dozen unique breakout sessions under the following content strands:

- Customer-centered design
- Business engagement
- Data and accountability
- Tools and resources
- Workforce boards

In April 2019, a second WIOA State Summit was held to continue efforts to share best practices across WIOA programs. Subject matter at this event focused on service integration strategies. Invitations for this summit were expanded to include one-stop required partners to promote a dialogue across partners and local workforce areas.

WIOA Wednesday Webinars

Interactive webinars are held weekly to provide a platform for interagency partners to discuss integral WIOA implementation topics. The widely attended webinars provide a forum for questions and increase awareness of the required partner programs, activities and resources. 2019 webinars included topics on regional and local planning, the issuing of new State guidance on WIOA implementation, State Plan development, the one-stop certification process, and effective practices for integrated service delivery and the effectiveness of an Integrated Resource Team.

WIOA Portal & Newsletters

The state has developed a web portal to organize implementation documents, policies and technical assistance information. To facilitate common and ongoing communications, the Interagency Work Group initiated a joint monthly newsletter entitled “Illinois Works Together” to provide a source of common information about WIOA implementation progress for all local program partners and stakeholders. Additionally, the ICCB collaborated with the partners to release a newsletter to highlight WIOA activities providing a better understanding of partner agencies' requirements to the adult education and career and technical education community.

Work-Based Learning Initiatives

Work-based learning (WBL) provides opportunities for workers to earn income while gaining critical job skills. Based on experience with interagency initiatives such as the Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing Program, bridge programs and other initiatives, Illinois is making a deliberate shift to increase the use of contextualized learning and work-based training while moving away from a one-size-fits-all mentality of service delivery. Illinois is aggressively promoting the use of work-based learning as a means of closing chronic skill gaps.

A strong emphasis continues to be placed on on-the-job training, pre-apprenticeship, registered apprenticeship non-registered and incumbent worker training. Ongoing technical assistance and the use of additional DOL funds to expand the use of apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships are currently underway. The experience local areas and community colleges are gaining through these projects is expected to help embed WIOA formula funding support for apprenticeships across the state along with other funding as it becomes available. Online resources, such as assessments and planning tools were made available on Illinois workNet. A beta-version of an online Business Hub continues a soft-launch as input from businesses is used to refine its look, feel and functionality.

Commerce and IDES continue to promote the use of Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) to businesses and the number of projects continues to grow rapidly.

An analysis of work-based learning activity is found in the Title IB section of this document.

Business Engagement

The State of Illinois understands that to give businesses and job seekers the workforce services they need, we need to better integrate our delivery of services to business. The core partners have built on a DOL- funded environmental scan of current business engagement in Illinois. The product included a “map” of current efforts to support the first step of alignment -- understanding gaps, overlaps and opportunities for integration. In 2017, the IWIB and core agency directors approved a framework for workforce, education and economic development partners to better listen to, learn from and respond to Illinois’ businesses. This framework was developed by a statewide group of business leaders and workforce partners and is meant to identify the elements and requirements of an integrated business services model for state and regional programs that will best equip them to understand and meet the ongoing workforce needs of Illinois’ businesses. A working group of IWIB, agency partner and local workforce area representatives has since been charged with identifying and supporting key implementation strategies and tasks.

Support Employer-Driven Regional Sector Initiatives

The workforce system must have a better understanding of business needs to ensure that efforts are truly leading to solutions for critical skill shortages. A proven model to improve communication between businesses and workforce programs is the use of an employer-driven sector partnership. The state has and will continue to provide funding and technical assistance to promote the development of business collaborations. The Department of Commerce provided on-site technical assistance to groups of businesses and stakeholders working to establish manufacturing sector partnerships in three economic development regions.

Regional sector-based listening sessions were held in the fall of 2018 and early 2019 in Manufacturing and Healthcare. Findings regarding issues raised by businesses at these events were added to cross-sector surveys conducted by the interagency Integrated Business Services Workgroup. A findings and recommendations report was issued in late 2019 and is currently being used to inform ongoing and future business engagement efforts.

Commerce staff continue to speak to business groups. In 2017 and 2018, staff addressed the Illinois Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives to encourage business leaders to work together to jointly address their workforce needs. In 2019, we continued this partnership by working with this group to arrange a speaker from the Chicago Apprentice Network to provide business-to-business information sharing on the benefits of apprenticeships.

Staff from the Departments of Commerce and Employment Security jointly participated in a Talent Pipeline Management Academy attended by system representatives from all regions of the state to provide foundational information on the benefits of business-driven collaborations. In 2019 local staff at these agencies attended a series of Talent Pipeline Management trainings in Washington DC. This training provided practical lessons in working through the six phases of TPM and allowed trainees to learn and ask about best practices from more experienced practitioners from across the US.

Inclusion Initiatives

The Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services is working with the core partners to integrate the national technical assistance effort funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Community Inclusion into the State's business engagement strategy. This effort is focused on engaging businesses throughout the state through job-driven vocational counseling concentrated on potential opportunities for individuals in high-growth sectors.

Career Pathways for Targeted Populations

The state has employed several approaches to promote the adoption of career pathway strategies. Each is designed to reinforce embedded pathways as a fundamental element of program design. Illinois Pathways, located on the Illinois workNet® portal, is an innovative public-private education partnership that is organized to support local implementation of National Career Clusters Framework and Programs of Study by coordinating and reducing the transaction cost among statewide networks of education partners, businesses, industry associations, labor organizations and other organizations.

The pathways are a basis for clusters of specific occupations or careers grouped together because they share similar interests, strengths and skills. A key to a robust career pathways system is the full

incorporation of portable, stackable credentials into the system, particularly at the postsecondary level. Fortunately, in Illinois, the incorporation of portable, stackable credentials has been an ongoing commitment of the postsecondary career and technical education system since the implementation of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act (Perkins IV).

The State of Illinois is dedicated to ensuring that all students have access to rigorous and relevant educational opportunities, linked to established career pathways that prepare them for success in college and careers. Illinois Career and Technical Education (CTE) provides students with the academic and technical skills necessary to succeed in the knowledge and skills-based economy. Students participating in these programs are held to specific and reliable industry-based learning standards to ensure that they are fully prepared for postsecondary education and for the high-wage, high-skill and high-demand career of their choice.

The ICCB recognized that CTE students at a community college do not always fit the model of transition implied in the Perkins IV definition. Thus, the agency moved early to adopt a more holistic career pathways approach to implementation. For example, the ICCB, CTE and Adult Education divisions partnered to develop an Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS). The purpose is to provide integrated CTE and Adult Education instruction, so adult students can earn at least one “stackable,” credit-bearing, post-secondary education credential as well as industry-recognized credentials that lead to high-wage employment in Illinois. In integrated programs, career and technical educators teach classes alongside adult education instructors, ensuring that students receive not only integrated curriculum inclusive of basic skills enhancements, but also curriculum tied to the latest in industry standards developed in partnership with employers.

In 2017, the Illinois General Assembly passed Public Act (PA) 100-0261 and PA 100-0195, allowing the ICCB to curate credit for prior learning policies from community colleges throughout the state. PA 100-0195 is specifically attentive to military credit for prior learning. The ICCB has focused on Military Occupational Specialties, such as criminal justice, human resources, and occupations in the transportation, distribution, and logistics fields. Additionally, state regulations will be enacted by June of 2018 that require each community college to develop credit for prior learning policies that address a variety of methods for earning these credits. Community colleges, four-year colleges and universities in Illinois play a key role in helping residents pursue credentials that will help them access high-skill, high-wage jobs. Partnerships with high schools ensure graduates are college-ready, while dual credit opportunities, transfer assistance, recognition for prior learning, and other innovative approaches help learners – particularly low-income individuals – move through the P-20 pipeline.

Bridge Programs

The goal of bridge programs is to sequentially bridge the gap between the initial skills of individuals and the skills they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and career-path employment. Illinois’ bridge programs prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in post-secondary education and training leading to career-path employment in demand occupations as identified by the local labor market information. Individuals in all targeted populations could potentially benefit from a bridge program. Illinois has had a unified bridge definition between the community college system and the workforce since 2010. Bridge programs must be built on the criteria below to be an approved program in the state.

- The delivery of bridge programs does not have to be through an eligible training provider with a certified training program. They may be provided by an approved and funded Adult Education program, the credit or non-credit department(s) of a community college, Community-based organization (CBO) or other type of provider that offers non-credit workforce training.
- Training programs may be offered by a single entity (e.g., a community college or a CBO) or by a partnership (e.g., a CBO and a community college). Regardless of the provider, they may provide opportunities to earn college credit (such as through escrow credit accounts), may offer dual enrollment in credit and non-credit programs, or may offer a multi-level program that moves people from an adult education course offered by one provider to a non-credit occupational course offered by the same or another provider.
- All bridge program providers must use pre-skill assessments consistent with program requirements to place students into the appropriate courses as well as post-skill assessments to measure progress.
- All providers will use data tracking systems to collect and analyze key information about bridge program participants and graduates.

Under WIOA, the partners will update and enhance the current bridge definition policy by engaging Title I, Title II and college credit leaders and providers to learn what is working with the current policy and what could be adjusted to ensure that bridge programs are more widely implemented across Illinois. As a result, any new policy developed around the bridge definition and model will cut across all four of the core partner programs to ensure services are maximized for the students in the adult education programs. Furthermore, information garnered from the review of the definition, will inform new initiatives that promote sector-based pre-bridge and bridge activities, enhance and expand bridge programs offerings, and align with core partner WIOA requirements. The focus will be to expand access and success in these sector-based bridge programs across all WIOA partners, as a way to braid funding to ensure an integrated approach to service. As the leader in the development of bridge programs for Illinois, ICCB will use their lessons learned to help expand the program model across partners.

Integrated Education and Training (IET)

The ICCB Adult Education and Career and Technical Education divisions continue to support IET initiatives to provide adult education students with the opportunity to earn industry-recognized credentials, college certificates and college credit while studying to obtain a high school equivalency certificate or learn the English language. Through the IET program in Illinois, Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS), many students will be connected to Title I to ensure they have the services necessary to gain access to resources for training and employment opportunities upon completion. Additionally, ICCB created ICAPS Model Two – a non-credit model that includes all of the elements in ICAPS Model One but does not carry a postsecondary certificate. However, it does require a strong connection with a postsecondary institution and also requires the preparation of students to earn industry-recognized credentials.

Initiatives for Employment Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities

The Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services has worked effectively with Commerce on projects throughout the state that support employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the one-stop system. In one instance, DRS provided cooperative funding to support individuals with disabilities seeking to establish their own businesses. In another, DRS provided funding to community providers as part of an overall package including DEI funds. DRS and Commerce have a strong level of communication around the needs of the individuals being served and the goals of the projects. In 2017 Commerce and DRS developed a series of online video presentations providing information on state disability programs and workforce services for people with disabilities. This includes a set of videos in American Sign Language for the benefit of deaf individuals. DRS will continue to pursue development and expansion of agreements that further service integration and promote employment of people with disabilities. This includes agreements relating to services to students and youth with disabilities and transition services generally.

Assistive Technology

People with disabilities often rely on technology to access information, services and even employment. This makes it vital to ensure that web sites and information systems are compatible with assistive technologies – screen magnifiers, screen readers, speech recognition systems, etc. The Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services has expertise regarding assistive technologies and accessibility standards and will provide information and technical assistance to partner agencies to help ensure that all web sites and information systems within the workforce system are accessible by people with disabilities.

Returning Citizens

In 2017, the Department of Commerce issued a statewide activities innovation grant to the Safer Foundation, an organization that supports the efforts of people with criminal records to become employed, law-abiding members of the community and as a result, reduce recidivism. This pilot project is targeted at citizens returning to high-risk neighborhoods where recidivism rates are high; and combines mentoring and other intensive supportive services with technical skill training, and work-based learning with an established network of business partners. Promising practices and lessons learned were shared with partner programs, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) and local workforce innovation boards (LWIBs) following an evaluation of participant outcomes at the end of the grant in 2018.

The Illinois Adult Education and Literacy Adult Education Advisory Council represents all categories of eligible adult education providers and stakeholders with the mission of identifying, deliberating, and recommending instructional priorities. During Fiscal Year 2019, the council included a committee focusing on the various needs of returning citizens as it related to the development of workplace skills and employability training. The recommendations from this committee will drive future actions with potential outcomes such as strengthening the educational pipeline between county jails and the Illinois Department of Corrections, developing a referral process for returning citizens to access One-Stop programs and local community colleges upon release, and develop a resource guide for returning citizens that provides information on adult basic education, ESL services, workforce training, and employability skills. The Illinois Adult Education and Literacy Adult

Education Advisory Council will continue to host a committee focusing on the educational and workforce needs of justice-involved individuals and returning citizens.

As mentioned earlier, the Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Program is a partnership to reduce recidivism by providing life skills, career readiness, and occupational training to inmates prior to release. As part of the program, inmates participate in essential skills training, cognitive behavior therapy, high school equivalency/GED courses (if applicable), technical education, work experience within the institution, and job search. Two additional Life Skills centers are operational in Illinois, Logan County and in Murphysboro.

The SAFER Foundation recently received an ICCB Innovation Bridge and Transitions grant. As a leader in working with returning citizens, SAFER Foundation will train individuals in the Information Technology (IT) field by equipping them with the tools, industry knowledge and stackable credentials to enter and advance in IT. Entering participants will go through an initial IT Readiness Camp before advancing to the credential track.

Public Comment

The State of Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) is responsible for overseeing the development, implementation and modification of the Unified State Plan and for convening all relevant programs, required partners and stakeholders. The state agencies responsible for the administration of the core and required programs have reviewed and commented on appropriate operational planning portions of the Unified State Plan. Illinois' Unified State Plan was released for public comment on January 10, 2020. The summary of the comments to the Unified State Plan is available in Attachment A

(<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20A%20-%20Updated%202020%20Public%20Comment%20Summary%20Compilation.pdf>) to the final plan.

To further increase collaboration in the development of the Unified State Plan, surveys of the business and organized labor communities in Illinois were conducted in December 2019 and January 2020 respectively. Hundreds of responses were received from business and labor leaders, as well as workers and businesspeople. The purpose of these surveys was to further inform this Plan's economic analyses and outlined strategies. Full results of the two surveys are included as Attachment Y

(<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20Y%20-%20Business%20and%20Labor%20Survey%20data%202020.pdf>).

B. The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

This section provides a snapshot of the strengths and weaknesses of Illinois' workforce system. Core partners collaboratively identified the strengths and weaknesses as part of the unified planning process and as part of the ongoing efforts to better align and integrate service delivery consistent with the state's vision, principles, goals and strategies.

Illinois' Strengths in Regard to Activities listed in Part A.

There have been several developments since the passage of WIOA that contributed to strengthened alignment between WIOA programs. WIOA has motivated state leadership to establish systems and protocols that foster deep and ongoing interagency communication, which has, in turn, led to improved trust and stronger relationships. Since 2014, these efforts have accelerated and broadened in scope, leading to multiple innovative workforce development activities.

WIOA Implementation & Coordination

- The IWIB has taken a stronger role in the implementation and oversight of the WIOA provisions.
- Multiple core partners contributed to the development of the Illinois Community College Board Workforce Education Strategic Plan (WESP), which laid the foundation for the joint development of the Unified State Plan.
- Illinois has been successful in administering innovative education and training initiatives, such as Integrated Education and Training Models 1 and 2, and pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships.
- Through a statewide partnership, a strategic plan was developed for Adult Education that includes an emphasis on best practices, college and career readiness, technology and postsecondary transitions and lifelong learning. All of these assist in the development of talent to fill the workforce needs.
- Statewide policies are being developed by the IWIB that include processes to ensure full stakeholder input and effective implementation plans. This includes the development and implementation of the certification policy and development and beginning implementation of the service integration policy.
- The state is encouraging the use of lean principles in workforce development programs.
- State partners continue to work collaboratively and explore opportunities for service alignment through service integration.

Technical Assistance & Professional Development

- Representatives from all core partners jointly plan a WIOA State Summit - a gathering of over 500 WIOA program leaders and staff to share best practices and lessons learned on implementation issues.
- Collaborative two-way communication is practiced through regular WIOA Wednesday Webinars topics central to WIOA implementation.
- Illinois has created state-level teams to provide:
 - Operations technical assistance, such as assistance in the compliant execution of MOUs and other documents required by State guidance and Federal law, and

- Professional development for the local workforce system which includes all partners. Additionally, this team is charged with the creation of the annual WIOA Summit and other events, designed to promote continuous improvement.

Business Engagement

- As required by WIOA 101(d)(3)(iv), the IWIB business Engagement Committee will work together with the various cross-agency teams to better align and integrate business services among the core programs, along with state and regional economic development partners.
- Business Service Teams (BST) will promote, market, connect and provide access to initiatives that afford businesses the opportunity to access and implement available workforce programs and services applicable to their needs.
- The state has provided technical assistance to local programs regarding business engagement, sector strategies, work-based learning, labor market information and best practice models to improve services to special target populations.
- Illinois is expanding the number of effective business-led regional sector partnerships that exist and that can be leveraged as models for the rest of the state.
- Illinois, through a statewide partnership, has developed an Essential Employability Skills framework designed to address employer needs.
- Illinois has developed the Service Integration Policy and corresponding framework and self-assessment tools for the local partners. This is based on the WINTAC model and is designed to assess partners' level of integration. Through the self-assessment, local areas will be able to identify where they have strengths and weaknesses in moving towards integration and will enable them to strategize how to continue to move forward together.
- The Interagency Technical Assistance (TA) Team, through a review of individual agency reporting systems and partner business engagement, may now identify areas where assistance may be needed. The Interagency TA Team will support these business service teams through guides and tools, as well as professional development and training, and will take steps to confirm that integrated business services teams are functioning and working within the agreed parameters as described by the State of Illinois Integrated Business Services framework document.

Career Pathways for Targeted Populations

- One of the most effective ways in which the post-secondary CTE system has modeled good partnerships in Illinois is through the implementation of the Pathways to Results (PTR) initiative. PTR has been utilized in over 120 post-secondary CTE programs across the state.
- Illinois has adopted a statewide definition of bridge programs, which allows for consistency in program development. The state's bridge programs prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in post-secondary education and training leading to career-pathway employment.

- Illinois has created a Career Pathways Dictionary and agreed upon a statewide career pathways definition, which is included in this plan.
- Illinois has been awarded several apprenticeship grants that will strengthen the ability of the state to increase the number of individuals who successfully move through career pathways and into good-paying jobs.
- The state is pursuing innovation in providing employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities by connecting them with businesses that match their skills and helping them overcome any barriers they have to employment.

Illinois provided local areas with support to assure additional and current accessibility upgrades in 2017. These efforts were partially the result of Illinois' effective participation in a grant-supported through DOL funding called the Disability Employment Initiative. These purchases and installation addressed both identified compliance deficiencies and reflect, in some instances, the newest technology, tools and software.

Illinois' Weaknesses with Regard to Activities Listed in Part A.

The challenges for the workforce system in Illinois are listed in the next section. Illinois is positioned to address these challenges through the IWIB and its committees, the WIOA Interagency TA Team and the local areas, including local partners. These groups constantly adapt and evolve, focusing on opportunities for future alignment between the core and required partners.

WIOA Implementation & Coordination

- The quality of local career services lack consistency.
- The level of regional and local cross-program collaboration varies but has improved significantly as local partner staff follow the lead of the State Interagency Technical Assistance Team.
- Historically, the service delivery model has been characterized by a "siloeed" approach. This weakness has improved significantly since 2015 among the state agency WIOA partners, but it remains a work in progress with some required one-stop partners in some LWIAs. Illinois is challenged by geographical and local boundary alignment. Some program boundaries do not align with LWIA boundaries. For example, under Adult Education, "Area Planning Councils Districts" align with Community College Districts, while CSBG and SCSEP provider territories overlap LWIAs.
- Misunderstandings remain on the part of some partners regarding what data sharing is actually permissible under WIOA.

Technical Assistance & Professional Development

- Effectively scheduling interactive webinars and stakeholder feedback events in a fashion that allows for full participation from the wide array of desired WIOA stakeholders remains difficult.

Business Engagement

- The level and quality of employer engagement varies, however local areas have embraced the importance of establishing ongoing business relationships and have demonstrated an interest in the state’s unified business services framework. The Integrated Business Services Work Group continues efforts to promote improved cross-agency collaboration and integration between both state-level and local area staff. The mission now is to develop a single, reliable, agreed-upon strategy to support engagement and contact between employers and the workforce/economic development system.
- The level and quality of regional and local public-private sector partnerships vary. In 2018, the state invested in developing the capacity of intermediaries to promote the creation of regional sector partnerships.

Career Pathways for Targeted Populations

- Federal laws governing some programs limit data sharing, and the information collected is often not aligned across core partners due to statutory regulations (e.g. Adult Education does not require a social security number to receive services).
- There is also a misunderstanding on the part of some local partners as to what data sharing is actually permissible. This is an example of something that can be addressed through technical assistance as discussed above in strengths.
- Program statutory and regulatory requirements can serve as roadblocks to alignment. For example, DRS intake by other entities is prohibited because only DRS staff are permitted or allowed to handle “non-delegable functions” by statute.

C. Illinois Workforce Development Capacity

This section of the plan includes a summary of the workforce system and the capacity of state agencies and boards that are responsible for the administration of the workforce and education programs.

Interagency Coordination and Planning

The Governor’s Office and the IWIB provide the major mechanisms for promoting joint planning and policy development around the vision, principles, goals and strategies outlined in Illinois’ Unified State Plan. The state workforce board has become a true strength to Illinois due to the business-focused efforts of its members. The IWIB has addressed its statutorily required functions through many avenues. Beginning in 2015, the Executive Committee has overseen a formal board professional development process that continues today and will lead to more technology-based, interactive elements beginning in 2020. A new manual, revised orientation plan, mentoring among members and with local boards, formalized and consistent protocols, and compliance with mandated activities of appointed members are only a few of the developments that continue to strengthen the knowledge and understanding of board members to WIOA, their functions, and the responsibilities to the board and the entire WIOA system. These are mentioned as an overview to the many efforts to educate the members on the system, available services and programs of the partners, and best practices in engaging them throughout their work.

The current IWIB Strategic Plan is in the process of being modified to reflect the current priorities of the board and State of Illinois, including the Governor's EO 3, Five-Year Economic Development Plan and elements of Illinois' Unified State Plan. Stronger collaboration with state and local partners will be key to the success of the board moving forward.

Discussions on appropriate modifications have led to changes in the current standing committees -- as the board deactivated the Information Technology Committee and created an Employer Engagement Committee -- and better reflected the board's emphasis on leading the system in identifying and supporting continuous improvement opportunities through a revised set of priorities under the Continuous Improvement Committee (formerly labeled as the Evaluation and Accountability Committee). These changes address a more streamlined set of priorities of the board that will lead to achievable outcomes over the next 2-4 years. Collaboration is a strength of these standing committees, and other sub-groups of the IWIB, as they ensure input is received by multiple stakeholders including state and local board members, businesses, partner agencies and other key stakeholders.

The state established a WIOA Interagency Work Group, consisting of WIOA core and required partners, to identify and jointly address WIOA implementation issues at the state, regional and local levels. The intended outcome is to provide consistent, coordinated direction and technical assistance to regional and local-level partners as they continue to enhance and strengthen established, effective One-Stop Delivery Systems. As mentioned in the Workforce Development Activities section, this group evolved into the "WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team" (TA Team).

The TA Team meets monthly to discuss WIOA implementation and one-stop service delivery issues raised by a local workforce board, local program partner or state partner staff, whether they are based in the central office, a regional office or in a local one-stop. Members maintain open lines of communication, and regularly collaborate on specific day-to-day operations issues. The TA Team creates sub-groups as needed to jointly handle tasks, such as 1) review and approval of regional and local plans; 2) review and approval of MOUs and MOU annual budgets; and 3) provision of intensive technical assistance to LWIBs and local partners to prevent MOU impasses. The TA Team helps state agency and local partner staff effectively execute WIOA within federal statutory and regulatory requirements and state policy directives.

The WIOA Summit Planning Workgroup continues to plan and host regional professional development events for the WIOA partner programs in 2019. These events will be followed by a third state-wide summit in 2020.

These interagency planning efforts are supported through the efforts of three of Illinois' major public universities: Northern Illinois University (NIU), Illinois State University (ISU), and Southern Illinois University (SIU). Each institution brings valuable resources to the table. NIU's Center for Governmental Studies and Educational Systems Center support IWIB policy and data initiatives in areas that include service integration, apprenticeship, one-stop certification, and career pathways, among others. NIU also provides facilitation and logistical support for several IWIB committees. ISU's Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support (ICSPS) creates, supports and delivers professional development for career and technical education professionals across Illinois. ICSPS services include technical assistance, publication development, and the facilitation of program

improvement strategies relating to college transition, recruitment, retention and completion. SIU's Center for Workforce Development designs and supports electronic tools and services offered on Illinois workNet in service to statewide workforce development activities under WIOA. Partnering with these institutions leverages important intellectual, technical, and administrative assets and offers an important opportunity for these universities to play a direct role in Illinois' workforce development.

State and Regional Planning Process

Governor Pritzker, in the opening days of his administration, issued EO 3, focused on workforce and economic development. State agencies, including those identified with WIOA were charged with responding and aligning with the Executive Order and prepared an action plan in response. EO3 is taken into consideration as workforce and economic development decisions are made at the state, regional, and local levels.

The Leadership Team includes high-level state policymakers with the authority to make commitments on behalf of their respective agencies, and other key public and private stakeholders whose involvement is critical to the development of the Unified State Plan.

The Leadership Team is responsible for establishing the vision and principles and directing the implementation of strategies included in the Unified State Plan. The Leadership Team has also worked with the WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team to oversee and direct the development of the regional planning process in Illinois. The planning process in each of Illinois' economic development regions included the review of data, establishment of goals, development of strategies and the integration of services in developing the initial regional plans that went into effect July 2016, just as WIOA final regulations were released.

The IWIB, through its committee structure, is providing leadership to align the IWIB Strategic Plan, the Unified State Plan, and the Governor's EO 3. The standing committees include the Executive Committee, Continuous Improvement, Apprenticeship, Career Pathways for Targeted Populations, and Employer Engagement. Oversight and direction provided by these committees provide continuity and support for the WIOA partner collaboration and integration that is demonstrated throughout the 2020 Unified Plan, Regional and Local Plans and MOUs.

State Agency Capacity

The following is a discussion of the capacity of the state agencies and boards that are responsible for the administration of the workforce, education and economic development programs outlined in WIOA.

- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
 - Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs

The Office of Employment and Training oversees funding of Title IB administration, training and wraparound services provided by the 22 local workforce areas in Illinois. The office employs just over 40 staff located in Chicago, Springfield, Marion and Peoria. Staff provides program oversight and technical assistance to local workforce boards and Title IB administrators and staff support to the

IWIB. The Office of Employment and Training experienced vacancies in a small number of key positions mainly due to retirements in early 2019. Some of these have already been filled. Vacancies as of this writing are covered by temporarily reassigned duties until the position is filled. Additional details on program activities are in the section dedicated to Title IB.

- Employment and Training under the Community Services Block Grant Program (CSBG, authorized under Department of Housing and Urban Development)

Federal CSBG funds are administered by the Department and are awarded to 35 Community Action Agencies across the state. These agencies are required one-stop partners and have a presence in all comprehensive one-stops.

- Trade Adjustment Assistance Act Programs (Training)

The Office of Employment and Training oversees the administration of Trade funding for individuals connected with a Trade-certified dislocation events. The Trade staff are housed in the Office of Employment and Training and in SFY19/PY18 managed 40 dislocation events impacting nearly 5,300 dislocated workers.

- Regional Economic Development

The Office of Regional Economic Development has over a dozen staff, most of which are housed in each of the ten Economic Development Regions to help connect communities and businesses to the myriad of programs and information sources available at the Department. Regional staff are briefed on workforce development issues and also provide stakeholder input for WIOA regional planning. Regional Economic Development staff can connect businesses and regional industry groups to the appropriate local workforce area staff to help meet their talent needs.

- Business Development

The Office of Business Development operates an 800-line that provides assistance to businesses in, or considering operations in, Illinois. Call center staff are briefed on WIOA programs and can direct callers to the appropriate local American Job Center, or State of Illinois workforce staff for further assistance.

- Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)
 - Wagner-Peyser Program

IDES administers the Wagner-Peyser program in 36 locations throughout Illinois' 22 local workforce areas. IDES employs approximately 72 staff to perform basic WP career services throughout the state, working diligently to connect job seekers and businesses. IDES also has staff throughout five regions who oversee the administration of the Wagner-Peyser services to job seekers and businesses in the local workforce innovation areas.

- Unemployment Insurance/Trade Readjustment Assistance (UI/TRA)

IDES administers the Unemployment Insurance program in 36 locations throughout Illinois' 22 local workforce areas. IDES employs approximately 50 staff to perform basic UI and TRA career services in the American Job Centers. The 50 staff are located in American Job Centers, as well as through

direct linkage. IDES also has staff throughout five regions that oversee the administration of the Unemployment Insurance/TRA programs in the local workforce innovation areas.

- The Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) Program

JVSG staff provides veterans with professional employment services throughout the American Job Center Network. Assisting veterans in finding meaningful employment is a top priority at IDES. These services are provided at 36 locations throughout Illinois' 22 local workforce areas in all designated comprehensive one-stops. In addition to our frontline Employment Specialists, IDES has Veterans Employment Representatives that specialize in providing a full array of services to assist veterans. Each office is assigned a Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist and Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER). DVOP specialists provide individualized career services to veterans with significant barriers to employment. LVERs conduct outreach to employers and business associations and engage in advocacy efforts with hiring executives to increase employment opportunities for veterans and encourage the hiring of disabled veterans. IDES employs twenty-one (21) LVER staff and twenty-six (26) DVOP staff. Program Authorization; Title 38, United States Code, Sections 4102A (b) 5 (38 U.S.C. §4102A(b)5).

- The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) Program

The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Program, with direction from the State Monitor Advocate (SMA), ensures that all services provided to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs) are qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate to the services provided to non-MSFWs as required by U.S. Department of Labor federal regulations (20 C.F.R. 651-658). To ensure compliance, the SMA monitors IDES to ensure equity of services to MSFWs, provides technical assistance and training to IDES staff, administers the Statewide Complaint System, operates the MSFW outreach program, and maintains and promotes the use of the Agricultural Recruitment System. To bring these services to MSFWs who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the local offices, the MSFW Program staff conducts outreach to MSFWs in their living, working or gathering areas to inform them about services available from the local job center offices. The services available include: the availability of referrals to agricultural and non-agricultural employment and training, referral to support services, testing, counseling, other job development services, information on the Statewide Complaint System, farmworker rights and services/resources provided by state agencies and community-based organizations. IDES has designated four (4) offices (Springfield, Champaign, Peoria, Mt. Vernon) as Significant Local Offices due to an estimated large number of MSFWs in their respective service areas. The program is currently staffed with three (3) employees, one of whom is the interim State Monitor Advocate. IDES is currently in the process of hiring a permanent State Monitor Advocate.

- Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)

The ICCB was established to create a system of public community colleges that would be in reach of every Illinois resident and is now the largest provider of workforce training in Illinois and the third largest community college system in the country. Comprised of 48 community colleges in 39 districts, the system ensures that all Illinois residents have educational and training opportunities leading to high wage and high growth employment. Additionally, the ICCB oversees Adult Education and

Family Literacy (a WIOA core partner - Title II) currently to over 75 providers, serving over 59,000 students, and receiving \$51,728,825 in FY2020 state and federal funding. The ICCB also administers the Perkins postsecondary funds - \$17,905,733 for FY2020 (WIOA required partner) for the 48 community colleges. Recently, ICCB was awarded Department of Labor Scaling Apprenticeships Through Sector-Based Strategies Grant for \$3.9M that will serve over 1700 Illinois residents.

- Illinois Department of Human Services
 - Division of Rehabilitation Services (IDHS-DRS)

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) administers Title IV activities and is the state's lead agency serving individuals with disabilities. DRS works in partnership with individuals with disabilities and their families to assist them in making informed choices to achieve full community participation through employment, education and independent living opportunities. The primary focus of the vocational rehabilitation program is to assist individuals with significant disabilities in obtaining and retaining competitive integrated employment. Vocational rehabilitation services are designed to prepare an individual for employment through an individualized planning process. DRS staff also provides assistance to workforce partners in the area of program accessibility and assistive technology. DRS provides services to individuals with disabilities in 45 field offices throughout the state. These offices are divided into 5 different regions. DRS serves approximately 40,000 individuals each year as young as age 14. Services provided include transition services to youth with disabilities in secondary education, post-secondary education training and supports, job placement assistance, counseling and restorative services. In FY19, DRS assisted 5,114 individuals with obtaining a successful employment outcome.

- Division of Family and Community Services

The Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Family & Community Services is the state administrator of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. TANF is a time-limited cash assistance program for low-income families. DHS operates Family Community Resource Centers (FCRC) statewide serving TANF customers on the pathway to self-sufficiency. TANF customers are evaluated and assessed for suitability for inclusion in employment and training programs. TANF customers are also assessed to determine barriers and barrier reduction service needs. These issues may be related to substance abuse, mental health and domestic violence. The FCRC identifies the customer's needs to create a Responsibility and Service Plan (RSP), which is a guide to services. The RSP contains employment and training needs, supportive service needs (e.g., transportation and uniforms) and childcare. Most TANF customers are also eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and medical assistance.

The Division contracts with community-based organizations to provide either work experience or job placement for TANF Employment and Training customers. The Division provides oversight of programs statewide and the Division's goal is to cultivate more career pathway opportunities for our TANF customers.

The Department of Human Services' Division of Family & Community Services has a strong presence in Comprehensive One-Stop Centers and is committed to increasing workforce engagement with collaborative partnerships to achieve employment opportunities for all adults served by DHS. A

taskforce has been created to strategically move through the process of ensuring service integration among Partners in the one-stop centers. Staff located in the Comprehensive One-Stop Centers is trained to assist customers utilizing the online TANF/SNAP/Medical application through the Application for Benefits Eligibility System (ABE), which is accessible through Illinois workNet. To streamline the referral process, DHS is actively involved in cross-training sessions at the one-stop centers to enhance awareness of services and resources provided on-site.

- Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA)

The Department administers the distribution of a significant amount of federal Senior Community Services Employment Program funding across the State. IDoA issues grants to local providers through a competitive application process and conducts oversight and monitoring of grants in accordance with federal regulations. Other national awardees of these program funds also issue grants to local providers in Illinois. In some cases, a provider may receive funds for this program of IDoA and these other federal awardees.

- Illinois Department of Corrections

The Illinois Department of Corrections operates 28 Correctional Centers across the state of Illinois. Each facility offers adult basic education, GED programming, cognitive-behavioral programming, medical services, mental health assessment and treatment and vocational training to individuals in their custody. Within the Illinois Department of Corrections population, various needs are identified as barriers to positive re-entry back into the community. IDOC is committed to being a partner with other state agencies to assist in identifying barriers, collaborating on linkage to services and providing additional options for enrollment in appropriate benefits prior to release. IDOC is also committed to increasing workforce engagement in collaboration with state agencies to increase positive release outcomes for the individuals in their custody.

Local Area Capacity

The State of Illinois consists of 10 Economic Development Regions and 22 Local Workforce Innovation Areas. All local areas have established boards in place and have at least one comprehensive one-stop center. Staffing levels vary from area to area. In SFY19/PY18 just over \$115 Million in WIOA formula grants was allocated to the local areas, with individual awards ranging from \$1.0 to \$49.9 Million.

The State Core Partners continue efforts to enhance local area capacity on several fronts including:

- Service integration for individuals
- Service integration for businesses
- Services to individuals with disabilities and other special populations
- Professional development

For example, the State is promoting a strong emphasis on improved service integration. The WIOA Core Partners are using the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's relationship with the US Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services to leverage resources from its Workforce Innovation

Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC). Using the WINTAC service integration continuum, the State developed a process to build local area capacity for improved service delivery to both individual customers and businesses. Every local area completed an initial service integration self-assessment in September 2019 with input from all required one-stop partners. Going forward, local areas are tracking progress on locally selected goals and action items to improve service integration. Annual self-assessments will be completed to benchmark progress and identify new and/or refined action items for continuous improvement. Additional details on this initiative are covered in the Operational elements.

II.b. State Strategic Vision and Goals

1. Vision

In the spring of 2019, IWIB members and State agency leaders representing core and required partners came together to review and update the vision, principles and goals for the State of Illinois. The National Governor’s Association facilitated this process by leading exercises, such as identifying strengths and weaknesses prior to drafting updated language. The process led to a consensus that language must emphasize equity and inclusion for all. Other critical elements identified include:

- Support systems for workers to thrive
- Target industries for workers to retain long-lasting careers
- Emphasis on life-long learning
- Data-driven solutions
- On and off ramp for career pathways
- Two-way connection between employers and workers

All considerations were used to develop the updated strategic vision and principles ultimately approved by the IWIB providing a foundation for the Unified State Plan, Regional Plans and Local Plans.

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.

Principles:

- Demand-Driven Orientation - Through a sector strategy framework, the state will support the system assessment of business needs for talent across local, regional and state levels.
- Strong Partnerships with Business at All Levels - Strong partnerships with business will assist employers to define in-demand skills and articulate those needs to education and training providers. Strong partnerships at the regional and local level will be recognized and promote development of high-quality partnerships across the state.

- Pathways to Careers of Today and Tomorrow - Partnerships with business will drive the development of career pathways that meet employers' skills needs today, while offering individuals clear opportunities to build and upgrade their skills, earn industry-recognized stackable credentials and advance their career over time. Those pathways should be integrated within the P-20 system to help all Illinois residents identify career pathways including apprenticeship options that offer flexibility to build upon their skills to meet the evolving needs of the global economy.
- Cross-agency Collaboration and Connections - The development of career pathways and industry-recognized stackable credentials will promote collaboration and alignment across agencies that contribute to Illinois' overall talent pipeline. There will be a focus on improving the strategic connections across all components and levels of the education and workforce systems.
- Integrated Service Delivery - Illinois will more effectively serve business and individual customers by implementing service integration strategies. Multiple state agencies and partners are positioned to provide the best experience possible for all WIOA customers by effectively planning and coordinating services available within local workforce systems.
- Equitable Access and Opportunity for All Populations - Connecting individuals with relevant supports, such as transportation, child care and transition services will enable the system to be responsive to the workforce readiness needs of all individuals and help targeted populations prepare for and advance along a career pathway.
- Clear Metrics for Progress and Success - Illinois will develop or adopt metrics that will define successful career pathway programs, assess equity and inclusion, return on investment of system resources, and monitor for progress and success informing continuous improvement and innovation efforts.
- Focus on Continuous Improvement and Innovation - Illinois will advance systemic and sustainable change that drives us to be prompt, agile and responsive to changing economic conditions. The system will establish mechanisms for continual assessment of system performance and improvement encouraging innovation and dissemination of non-traditional methods for delivering education and training.

2. State Goals

As was detailed in the report responding to the Governor's EO 3, charting a new course for Illinois' economic future requires that we learn from the past. We must scale up practices that have proven effective, re-engineer those that have not delivered on promised success, and abandon those with little to no return. Six lessons learned will help guide our path forward and form the basis for the statewide goals that follow:

1. As a driver of economic development, workforce development efforts must support the industries and occupations targeted at the state and regional levels while responding to the needs of local employers.

2. The skills gap is arguably Illinois' most serious barrier to economic prosperity, yet it has not been addressed as a top State priority. Building a pool of job seekers and workers with the right skills at the right time is essential if Illinois business and workers are to compete in the global economy today and in the future.
3. Our job creation efforts must be statewide and extend to employers of all sizes. Effective economic development strategies are needed in urban and rural areas alike and must reach beyond the headline-grabbing financial incentive packages intended to lure corporate headquarters to our state. We must also recognize that almost two-thirds of the nation's private-sector workforce is employed by small business. Strategies to stabilize, retain and grow this bedrock of our economy are urgently needed throughout Illinois.
4. All our investments must generate an acceptable return on investment. These returns must be measured in terms of outcomes most meaningful to Illinois residents – such as jobs, earnings, and long-term career prospects – not just in dollars spent or number of participants. We must be accountable for how we invest our scarce public resources and the initiatives in which we ask our partners to co-invest.
5. Programs to prepare individuals for the workplace too often ignore the harsh economic realities of low-income populations. Education and training models that offer an “earn as you learn” component enable economically at-risk populations to acquire new skills while supporting themselves and their families. For others, support for childcare and transportation can mean the difference between advancing on a career pathway or remaining in poverty.
6. The system-level change we envision will require that all State agencies with a stake in education, job creation, or workforce development support each other. We need to align our services, program eligibility, funding and even basic terminology so we do not work at cross-purposes.

Goals for Achieving the State's Strategic Vision

1. *Unite workforce development partners around regional cluster strategies:* Regional cluster strategies will focus resources on the industries with the highest potential to add jobs and increase prosperity in regions across Illinois. These strategies bring together the public and private sectors in each region to build on their unique strengths.
2. *Prepare Illinois' workers for a career, not just their next job:* Regardless of background, life circumstances or education level, Illinois workers can be prepared for high-demand careers by developing core academic, technical and essential employability skills throughout their lifetimes.
3. *Connect job seekers with employers:* Assist Illinois businesses to find the productive workers they need, through more efficient training and better services for job seekers and employers.

A. Goals for Preparing an Educated and Skilled Workforce

Illinois looks to expand career pathway opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings. By identifying service integration as a key component in

meeting both the employer and job seeker needs and implementing service integration strategies Illinois is more effectively able to meet those needs in a more targeted and aligned way with all of the partners. Key elements and metrics include:

- Increase the number of businesses that work with the state, regional and local workforce partners to communicate specific occupational competencies.
- Increase the number of businesses that work with the state, regional and local partners to identify industry credentials and their related competencies.
- Increase the number of workforce professionals that promote work-based learning and earning of industry credentials as part of their programs of study.
- Increase the number of businesses that offer work-based learning opportunities.

Additionally, Illinois is increasing career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers in order to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services and expansion of bridge programs. These elements align with many activities identified in the State’s CTE Plan. Key elements and metrics include:

- Provide more youth and individuals with barriers to employment with coordinated wrap-around services, such as:
 - Mentoring,
 - Remedial math and reading,
 - Contextualized bridge programs,
 - High School Equivalency (HSE) testing,
 - Disability accommodations,
 - Acquiring workplace skills and other training tailored to address barriers to employment for special populations prior to or along with technical skill training,
 - Integrated education and training,
 - Pre-apprenticeships, and
 - Apprenticeships.
- Promote a lifelong learning approach that leverages the accelerated time to earnings and full productivity model and follows up with additional skill training to allow workers to advance in their chosen career pathway.
- Promote the ten success elements for workforce pilot programs serving “opportunity youth” (i.e., young people who are not in school and not working) that were identified by the IWIB Youth Task Force. These elements utilize the principles and strategies of the WIOA Unified State Plan, and include:

- Partnerships with education, employers and workforce boards to plan and leverage resources.
- Business engagement in the development and management of career pathway programs.
- Credentials, certifications and/or postsecondary access that result from career pathway programs.
- Targeting of high demand industries and higher skill occupations that meet youth earnings and career goals.
- Development of work-based learning opportunities to experience the workplace first-hand.
- Individual career/employment plans for each youth participant.
- Availability of individual supports in order to meet the unique needs of each youth program participant.
- Contextualized learning and work-based skills that prepare youth for employment.
- Measuring results within the context of a continuous improvement methodology that will maintain and enhance program quality.
- Sustainability plans that connect the program to broader long-term talent strategies.

B. Goals for Meeting the Skilled Workforce Needs of Employers

Illinois strives to foster improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors that are the engine of economic growth for the state and its regions. Key elements and metrics include:

- Create an environment favorable to the formation of employer-led sector partnerships and the improvement of communications between business, economic development, workforce development and education.
- Increase the number of meaningful, public-private relationships.
- Improve the quality of the new and existing public-private partnerships.
- Promote data and demand-driven workforce and education initiatives.

This includes expanding the ability of employers and job seekers to access services by improving the Illinois public-private data infrastructure. Utilize this infrastructure to support the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development and education initiatives to develop sector partnerships and career pathways. Key elements and metrics include:

- Develop and promote data analytics that identify which services provide a better return on investment for various industries, populations and locales.

- Help businesses, jobseekers and students make better-informed decisions through understanding the options available and the implications of each.
- Invest in Geographic Information Systems to provide improved spatial analysis to identify patterns in-demand service deserts and economic hot spots.

3. Performance Goals

Illinois' proposed performance targets along with supporting documentation (including source references) associated with the PY 2020-2021 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) proposed performance targets. This has been prepared in response to the instructions provided by the United States Departments of Labor and Education.

Illinois established a performance accountability team for the 2016 planning cycle consisting of representatives from the core partners. Utilizing this process for the planning 2020 cycle, the team identified the extent to which each core partner either now captures the data elements required or has access to the data required from other sources. The team then identified gaps between the data required to support performance accountability and the data each core partner now collects, stores and reports. Based on an analysis of historical and current participant outcomes, each core partner will negotiate WIOA performance measures for each indicator, as applicable. The six primary indicators of performance under WIOA for each core partner (note that primary indicator four and five do not apply to Wagner-Peyser Employment Services) are:

- Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after exit - The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program (for Title I Youth, the indicator is participants in education, or training activities or employment in the 2nd quarter after exit);
- Employment Rate 4th Quarter after exit - The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program (for Title I Youth, the indicator is participants in education, or training activities or employment in the 4th quarter after exit);
- Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after exit - The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the 2nd quarter after exit from the program -- participants who obtain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent must also be employed or enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year of the exit from the program;
- Credential Attainment Rate - The percentage of program participants enrolled in education or training program (excluding those in OJT and customized training) who attain a recognized post-secondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in, or within, 1 year after exit from the program. A participant who has attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent only must also be enrolled in education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit.

- Measurable Skills Gains - The percentage of participants who during a program year are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational or other forms of progress towards such a credential or employment;
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers (not yet defined by DOL or the United States Department of Education (ED)) - This will be based on indicators developed as required by Section 116(b)(2)(A)(iv) of WIOA.

The core partners will present performance data to the IWIB regularly, to meet the requirement in WIOA that the board assess overall effectiveness of the workforce system.

Performance indicators negotiated for PY 2020-PY 2021 are:

- Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs: indicators for employment 2nd quarter, employment 4th quarter, median earning 2nd quarter, credential attainment rate, and measurable skill gains;
- Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy program: indicators for employment 2nd quarter, employment 4th quarter, median earning 2nd quarter, credential attainment rate, and measurable skill gains;
- Title III Wagner-Peyser Employment Service: indicators for employment 2nd quarter, employment 4th quarter, and median earning 2nd quarter; and
- Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation: measurable skill gains.

Baseline indicators are indicators for which states will NOT propose an expected level of performance in the Unified State Plan submission and will not need to come to agreement with the Departments' negotiated levels of performance:

- Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation: indicators for employment 2nd quarter, employment 4th quarter, median earning 2nd quarter, and credential attainment rate; and
- All Titles (I-IV): effectiveness in serving employers.

The context within which Illinois developed its proposed levels of performance for Adult, Dislocated Workers, Youth and Wagner-Peyser measures encompasses past performance outcomes. Averages for prior program year outcomes were computed (using the five prior program years), as well as a Target Outcome and Predicted Outcome that was produced by DOL. Target values were established using all the above and the ninety percent threshold applied to the DOL Target Outcome. Taking all data element outcomes into account, along with the environmental factors in Illinois, each target was set as shown in Table 15.

TABLE 15. PY2020 & PY2021 Expected Levels of Performance for Illinois

Illinois WIOA Performance Title I, II, III, IV	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY2021 Expected Level
Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter After Exit		
Title I – Adults	76.0	76.0
Title I – Dislocated Worker	80.5	80.5
Title I – Youth	73.0	73.0
Title II – Adult Education	27.6*	27.6*
Title III- Wagner – <u>Peyser</u>	61.0	61.0
Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline
Employment Rate – 4th Quarter After Exit		
Title I – Adults	73.0	73.0
Title I – Dislocated Worker	79.0	79.0
Title I – Youth	65.0	65.0
Title II – Adult Education	28.2*	28.2*
Title III- Wagner – <u>Peyser</u>	61.0	61.0
Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline
Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit		
Title I – Adults	5,700	5,700
Title I – Dislocated Worker	7,900	7,900
Title I – Youth	3,600	3,600
Title II – Adult Education	4,650*	4,650*
Title III- Wagner – <u>Peyser</u>	5,400	5,400
Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline
Credential Attainment		
Title I – Adults	67.0	67.0
Title I – Dislocated Worker	66.0	66.0
Title I – Youth	67.0	67.0

Title II – Adult Education	27.0	27.0
Title III- Wagner – <u>Pevser</u>	N/A	N/A
Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline
Measurable Skill Gains		
Title I – Adults	52.65	52.65
Title I – Dislocated Worker	51.28	51.28
Title I – Youth	46.18	46.18
Title II – Adult Education	46.0	46.0
Title III- Wagner – <u>Pevser</u>	N/A	N/A
Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation	62.2	62.2
Effectiveness in Serving Employers		
Title I – Adults	Baseline	Baseline
Title I – Dislocated Worker	Baseline	Baseline
Title I – Youth	Baseline	Baseline
Title II – Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline
Title III- Wagner – <u>Pevser</u>	Baseline	Baseline
Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline

The data and information that currently are available for each primary performance indicator vary across indicators, and across the core programs. The Departments will continue to use the transition authority under 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators in the State Plan.

**Title II Adult Education Employment Rate 2nd Quarter and 4th Quarter after exit and Median Earnings indicators require a file submittal to the state wage agency in order obtain wages on the individuals. The matching algorithm requires to match with SSN. Not all Adult Education individuals provide their SSN. Therefore, these performance indicators will be diminished by the amount of those individuals whose wages cannot be matched. Those without SSN are included in the tracking cohort denominator but will not be included in the numerator. This results in undercounting for successful employment. No self-reported or survey data from programs on successful employment of students are included in these rates but Illinois is investigating the feasibility of such processes.*

PY2020 and PY2021 WIOA Expected Levels of Performance for Illinois - Narrative

<p>TITLE I ADULT</p>	<p>Non-baseline measures - Employment Rate 2nd and 4th Quarter After Exit, Median Earnings, and Credential Attainment were negotiated in PY2018 and PY2019. Based on a full year of actual outcomes in PY2018, Illinois' expected outcomes in these measures for PY20/21 will remain the same as the negotiated measures in PY18/19 with the exception of Median Earnings that will increase from \$5,460 to \$5,700 and Adult Credential Attainment that will increase from 63.0 to 67.0 in PY20/21.</p> <p>Measurable Skill Gains was a baseline measure in PY18/19. It will be negotiated in PY2020 and PY2021. Based on PY2018 data that was collected, there were 6,392 participants that received 3,243 MSG for a rate of 50.6. Illinois will use this rate to establish the PY20/21 expected level of performance for that measure.</p>
<p>TITLE I DISLOCATED WORKER</p>	<p>Non-baseline measures - Employment Rate 2nd and 4th Quarter After Exit, Median Earnings, and Credential Attainment were negotiated in PY2018 and PY2019. Based on a full year of actual outcomes in PY2018, Illinois' expected outcomes in these measures for PY20/21 will remain the same as the negotiated measures in PY18/19 with the exception of Median Earnings that will increase from \$7,600 to \$7,700 in PY20/21.</p> <p>Measurable Skill Gains was a baseline measure in PY18/19. It will be negotiated in PY2020 and PY2021. Based on PY2018 data that was collected, there were 4,191 participants that received 1,995 MSG for a rate of 47.6. Illinois will use this rate to establish the PY20/21 expected level of performance for that measure.</p>
<p>TITLE I YOUTH</p>	<p>Non-baseline measures - Employment Rate 2nd and 4th Quarter After Exit, and Credential Attainment were negotiated in PY2018 and PY2019. Based on a full year of actual outcomes in PY2018, Illinois' expected outcomes in these measures for PY20/21 will remain the same as the negotiated measures in PY18/19 with the exception of Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit which will increase from 62.0 to 65.0 in PY20/21.</p> <p>Measurable Skill Gains was a baseline measure in PY18/19. It will be negotiated in PY2020 and PY2021. Based on PY2018 data that was collected, there were 4,487 participants that received 2,005 MSG for a rate of 44.7. Illinois will use this rate to establish the PY20/21 expected level of performance for that measure in PY20/21. Youth Median Earnings was a baseline measure in PY18/19. It will be negotiated in PY2020 and PY2021. Based on PY2018 data that was collected, the Median wage was \$3,600. Illinois will use this rate to establish the PY20/21 expected level of performance for that measure.</p>
<p>TITLE II ADULT EDUCATION</p>	<p>Title II Adult Education previously negotiated targets for Measurable Skill Gain performance for PY2018 and PY2019. In PY2018 Adult Education met the state negotiated target of 44%, meeting 10 of 11 EFL targets as established under National Reporting System (NRS) guidelines. Based on PY2018 data collected 24,825 out of 55,405 participants (44.8%) earned a MSG. MSG through</p>

<p>TITLE I ADULT</p>	<p>Non-baseline measures - Employment Rate 2nd and 4th Quarter After Exit, Median Earnings, and Credential Attainment were negotiated in PY2018 and PY2019. Based on a full year of actual outcomes in PY2018, Illinois' expected outcomes in these measures for PY20/21 will remain the same as the negotiated measures in PY18/19 with the exception of Median Earnings that will increase from \$5,460 to \$5,700 and Adult Credential Attainment that will increase from 63.0 to 67.0 in PY20/21.</p> <p>Measurable Skill Gains was a baseline measure in PY18/19. It will be negotiated in PY2020 and PY2021. Based on PY2018 data that was collected, there were 6,392 participants that received 3,243 MSG for a rate of 50.6. Illinois will use this rate to establish the PY20/21 expected level of performance for that measure.</p>
	<p>improvement of basic academic skills is essential on the pathway toward earning credentials.</p> <p>MSG targets are to be negotiated for PY2020 and PY2021 based on prior targets and performance. Illinois has also established a MSG target of 46% for PY2019. These targets coupled with actual performance for the MSG indicator will be used to establish the PY20/21 expected level of performance for that measure. Negotiations for these rates occur in late winter. Additionally, data has been collected on the follow-up measures and the performance in these areas will also become a part of the negotiation targets for PY20/21. During and prior to PY2019 targets were not established while these measures were in the baseline collection time period.</p> <p>*It's important to note that current matching algorithms to track individuals into employment require an SSN. While students without an SSN are included in the tracking cohort (i.e. denominator), only students with a valid SSN are able to be successfully tracked and positively counted for employment. This results in undercounting for successful employment. No self-reported or survey data from programs on successful employment of students are included in these rates but ICCB will be investigating the feasibility of such processes.</p>
<p>TITLE III WAGNER- PEYSNER</p>	<p>Non-baseline measures - Employment Rate 2nd and 4th Quarter After Exit and Median Earnings were negotiated in PY2018 and PY2019. Based on a full year of actual outcomes in PY2018, Illinois' expected outcomes in these measures for PY20/21 will remain the same as the negotiated measures in PY18/19 with the exception of Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit that will increase from 60.0 to 61.0 in PY20/21.</p> <p>Credential Attainment and Measurable Skill Gains do not apply and will never be reportable for WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser.</p>
<p>TITLE IV</p>	<p>All measures were Non-baseline measures in PY18/19. The Department of Human Services- Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DHS-VR) has been</p>

TITLE I ADULT	<p>Non-baseline measures - Employment Rate 2nd and 4th Quarter After Exit, Median Earnings, and Credential Attainment were negotiated in PY2018 and PY2019. Based on a full year of actual outcomes in PY2018, Illinois' expected outcomes in these measures for PY20/21 will remain the same as the negotiated measures in PY18/19 with the exception of Median Earnings that will increase from \$5,460 to \$5,700 and Adult Credential Attainment that will increase from 63.0 to 67.0 in PY20/21.</p> <p>Measurable Skill Gains was a baseline measure in PY18/19. It will be negotiated in PY2020 and PY2021. Based on PY2018 data that was collected, there were 6,392 participants that received 3,243 MSG for a rate of 50.6. Illinois will use this rate to establish the PY20/21 expected level of performance for that measure.</p>
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION	<p>collecting data for the baseline Measurable Skill Gains indicator per the Department of Education's requirements. After analyzing the data collected, planning and operations team have decided that the most conclusive and predictive information can be obtained from the PY2018 data. In PY2018, there was a total of 3,564 post-secondary participants, 2,217 achieved Measurable Skill Gains to achieve a rate of 62.2. DHS-VR has been conducting intensive training and implementing new and innovative methods to improve MSG attainment rate. For the PY2020 and PY2021 Expected Levels of Performance, and first year of negotiation on this measure for DHS-VR, the agency is proposing to set the expected level of MSG at 62.2.</p>

4. Assessment

IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board established the Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) in 2017 to address system evaluations and identification of continuous improvement opportunities. Immediately the Executive Committee nominated a Chair to lead its efforts and recruited five IWIB members from business and education to round out the team. The CIC's initial steps in late 2017 and early 2018 were to develop a set of six Charges that would provide a framework for all activities of the committee. For the Committee to accept responsibility for evaluations of an activity, policy or other priority of the IWIB or the system, it would have to fit within one or more of the following Charges:

Charge 1: Evaluation Design. Review evaluation elements of policies and processes created by the IWIB to determine the appropriateness of their relationship to their expected outcomes. Provide feedback and recommendations.

Charge 2: Evaluation Outcomes. Review outcomes of evaluation to determine if results conformed to intended outcome. Provide feedback and recommendations.

Charge 3: Continuous Improvement at Local Level. Review local performance related to the six federal performance measures for the WIOA core partners and make recommendations about strategies for continuous improvement at local levels.

Charge 4: Benchmarks. Examine and evaluate workforce quality and earning benchmarks and recommend changes.

Charge 5: Data Recommendations. Provide Recommendations for Readily Accessible Data and technical assistance recommendations for an intended audience.

Charge 6: Priority Activities. Manage priority activities as assigned by the IWIB Strategic plan.

The decisions of the CIC were made to ensure it maintained a focus on the most important system activities and priorities while maximizing a limited set of resources.

For more than a year, committee members learned about the workforce and education systems, gaining valuable knowledge provided by WIOA partners regarding policies, performance measures, priority populations and WIOA, in general. This set a foundation for the committee to make necessary decisions on the information and data that will be requested during its evaluation process.

Breaking down each of the Charges, the CIC identified a few areas of focus. Within the Operational Elements, the CIC will define in more detail some of these processes that will occur.

In Charge 1, it requested that current and future policies provide a set of outcomes, the measures by which policy could be evaluated including appropriate data and information necessary, and the process by which each measure would be evaluated or assessed. Two examples of this being immediately implemented were for the current policy on Minimum Training Expenditure requirements and the new Service Integration policy. Charge 2 would require the committee to determine and compare the effectiveness of the policy as written and implemented to meet the intended outcomes and make necessary recommendations for change or continuous improvement. The Minimum Training Expenditure policy is currently being reviewed with the expectation that information and data will be available to measure the effectiveness of the policy during PY19 followed by any necessary recommendations for policy revisions. Following a review of submitted Service Integration Self-Assessments from all Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIBs), a review occurred in PY19 to identify best practices and areas of success within the seven functional outcomes and fifteen goal areas. Through technical assistance, development of resources, and other outreach, these will be shared across the state among all LWIBs.

Charge 3 addresses the core performance requirements under WIOA by utilizing available data and performance outcomes compared to the negotiated state and local measures. Where local areas and programs are exceeding expectations, the IWIB will seek to identify the local decisions that contributed to the success. In addition to the core measures, the CIC will be tasked with identifying new benchmarks of excellence as warranted by Charge 4. This did not occur during the period of Unified Plan Modifications but will be an item of continued discussion during the cycle of the next Unified State Plan, with recognition that the core performance measures alone can't effectively identify full success of the system. Once determined, these will become part of the Annual Workforce Development Report Narrative submitted to the General Assembly annually.

Working in collaboration with performance experts across core programs, businesses and other stakeholders, the CIC will identify critical data and information needed to assure evaluations can be performed in an effective and efficient manner and with an eye for transparency in sharing the results with interested stakeholders. This Charge 5 will rely heavily on existing data systems and processes but will require the development of new methods of data and information collection.

Finally, the IWIB has instructed the CIC to take charge in ensuring it is being held accountable to its own standards of excellence. To that end, it has been recognized that the current IWIB Strategic Plan will require modifications be made to occur during the year 2020. To ensure priorities are appropriately addressed, the board will be looking at revised or new priorities that are manageable with limited resources.

Each of these Charges is an attempt to evaluate the current policies, processes and practices of the core programs, assess their effectiveness in meeting intended goals and outcomes, and identify best practices that are verifiable and replicable and make recommendations that can be implemented throughout Illinois. Multiple avenues of technical assistance and outreach will be considered to ensure continuous improvement is being made including the annual Workforce Summit to be held each April, regular regional and local workshops and roundtables that recognize the similarities that may exist among a few counties (as well as the uniqueness across the State), frequent WIOA Wednesday Webinars to promote collaborative input among all partners and stakeholders, and regular communications through new directives and guidance.

In June 2019, the CIC identified three priorities that are captured in one or more of the Charges above: policy evaluation of, among others, the Minimum Training Expenditure and Service Integration policies; continued development of an understanding of how WIOA programs are currently evaluated by partners, what continuous improvement processes are included, and what technical assistance is involved so that the IWIB can build upon what currently exists especially in areas where it has lead to a successful culture of improvement; and more clearly defining these processes and communicating them to IWIB committees, and across partners, where appropriate.

Annual Workforce Development Performance Report Narrative

Illinois developed and submitted its most recent report narratives on the state of workforce development performance in December 2018 and 2019 in response to [TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER No. 05-18](#) (November 07, 2018), and subsequent Changes. These reports were a deviation from the prior annual reports provided under the Workforce Investment Act that specifically requires input from partners and stakeholders on how the State is meeting the outlined goals, principles, priorities and initiatives of the current Illinois 2016-2020 Unified State Plan and 2018 Modifications.

Under the direction of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board, evaluations and assessments of the State's ability to meet expected outcomes will be the foundation and body of future reports with consideration given to new and revised guidance from the Departments of Labor and Education and the Illinois General Assembly. It is with these considerations that this new 2020-2024 Unified State Plan is being methodically developed to include only those initiatives that address the real priorities

of the Governor's EO 3, strategic plans of multiple partners and partner programs, and those required through Federal and other State guidance.

The report will be submitted annually to the Departments, the General Assembly and publicly, and will include the annual performance data tables and any future benchmarking measures as determined by the IWIB.

Assessment and Evaluation

The State will also consider information developed by the interagency Data Team and other program-specific evaluations, research reports and pilot programs in the development of an integrated evaluation and research approach. For example, Department of Commerce staff routinely perform analyses on:

- Local area training enrollment plan vs. actual (including work-based learning) and expenditures on direct training activities;
- The number of businesses and workers involved in incumbent worker training by LWIA, region and sector;
- Commercial driver training graduates vs. drivers' licenses issued; and
- Work-based learning enrollment and outcomes.

All State workforce innovation grantees are required to use a state-designed template to conduct an evaluation of project activities and outcomes as a final deliverable. The evaluation covers best practices and lessons learned on project development, project implementation, planned vs. actual outcomes and potential for replicating the project elsewhere. Other planned evaluation efforts include youth pathway programs and transitions from pre-apprenticeship to registered apprenticeship programs.

Additional information on these analyses is in the Title IB program section.

II.c. State Strategy

Below are six essential state strategies that underpin Illinois' commitment to engage and support all parts of our education, workforce, and economic development systems. These strategies complement the nine guiding principles of the IWIB Strategic Plan, including the identification of clear metrics for progress and success, for informing continuous improvement, system integration, and the identification of innovative efforts and ultimately, the Governor's Executive Order 3 to strengthen the state's commitment to workforce development and job creation. They contain bedrock principles of holistic career pathway management for secondary, as well as postsecondary students and workers and demand-responsive solutions for employers. Within the operational planning section, activities associated with implementing these strategies are fully described.

Strategy 1: Coordinate Demand-Driven Strategic Planning at the State and Regional Levels

The IWIB has a demand-driven strategic planning process grounded in strong partnerships across education (secondary and postsecondary), workforce and economic development at the state, regional and local levels. This process has built on and has integrated current state and regional planning

initiatives and resources of the core state agency partners and other partners, including the economic development arm of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

Strategy 2: Support Employer-Driven Regional Sector Initiatives

Illinois has been actively engaged in sectoral work and sector strategies for over a decade. The IWIB continues to guide this important work to ensure investment in resources and promotion of skills and careers in targeted industry and high demand occupations. Illinois was one of six states invited to participate in the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices Sector Strategies Learning Academy funded by the Mott, Ford and Joyce Foundations. The initial policy recommendations resulting from this effort remain valid today: a) Promote regionalism; b) Increase funding opportunities; c) Use data to drive decisions; d) Align resources and strategies; e) Present opportunities for unified messages; and f) Build legislative support. State and regional strategic planning activities align all levels of education, workforce and economic development and lay the foundation for employer-driven regional sector initiatives.

Strategy 3: Provide Economic Advancement for All Populations through Career Pathways

State and regional sector initiatives will provide the foundation for sector-based career pathway initiatives that expand career and educational opportunities for students and workers, including those facing multiple barriers to employment to achieve economic advancement. Cross-agency collaboration and alignment will also occur in the development and promotion of industry-recognized, stackable credential models of training and education.

Strategy 4: Expand Service Integration

In December 2018, the IWIB adopted a service integration policy that established 15 goals for effectively planning and coordinating the many workforce development programs offered locally through WIOA. Defined as “a combination of strategies to align and simplify access to one-stop center services and supports for employers, job seekers, and workforce professionals within the system,” the goal of service integration in Illinois is to provide the best experience possible for all WIOA customers. Seven service integration functions are addressed in this policy as the focus of Illinois’ local one-stop delivery system: customer-centered design, staffing, intake and assessment, services, career pathways, information and evaluation. Taken together, the goals and outcomes for these functions represent a long-term, high-level vision for one-stop service integration in Illinois. Operationalizing these goals occurs locally through the WIOA planning, one-stop certification and MOU negotiation processes.

The IWIB has moved assertively into implementation of this policy since its adoption. An IWIB interagency team developed a self-assessment guide in consultation with local workforce stakeholders to help Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIBs) implement the State’s service integration policy. This guide and the continuum model on which it is based were adapted from material developed by the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center through a project funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

Implementation of the service integration policy has focused on three main activities:

1. *Building an understanding of the policy, its importance, and the systems change model put in place to achieve service integration:* For example, service integration was the theme of the 2019 Illinois WIOA Summit held in April. Five of the most popular sessions were repeated as part of the State’s “Wednesday Webinar” series. These focused on the self-assessment process, effective practices in service integration, building a supportive and accountable one-stop culture, implementing successful collaboration between one-stop partners, and service integration and the one-stop certification process.
2. *Developing capacity at the local level to implement the service integration policy:* Activities included forming a cohort of eight LWIAs to pilot the service integration self-assessment, holding two statewide in-person technical assistance sessions, developing a “Facilitator’s Guide” to the self-assessment process, and developing a web presence on Illinois workNet for the latest service integration information (www.illinoisworknet.com/si).
3. *Tying service integration to other strategically important state-level workforce initiatives:* Activities have included incorporating the IWIB’s work on service integration into the Governor’s Executive Order 2019-03 and the Unified State Plan, ensuring that the self-assessment results feed into local and regional WIOA planning efforts, and offering a funding opportunity through the WIOA Statewide Workforce Innovation Program to focus on integrating services for job seekers and employers.

Two important events will drive next steps in service integration in Illinois. One is the focus of the IWIB’s Service Integration Policy Work Group to discuss the effectiveness of service integration activities to date, identify improvement opportunities, and advise on the next phase of implementation. A second is the analysis of the results of the LWIB’s self-assessment processes as required by the policy. In addition to providing action plans for addressing their top 3-5 service integration goals, they will also describe the strengths and improvement opportunities of the self-assessment process. This information will be used to identify needed resources and technical assistance at the local, regional and state levels for the next cycle of service integration.

Strategy 5: Promote Improved Data-Driven Decision Making

The Interagency Data Team provides a statewide analysis of current economic, labor market and demographic trends to the WIOA State Plan development team, IWIB, and a regional analysis of these elements to regional and local WIOA planning teams, including local workforce boards. This information is available to the public and workforce and education partners to assist businesses, jobseekers and students in making informed decisions.

Core Partner agencies will design, develop and use the statewide public-private data infrastructure (Strategy 6) to provide both employers and job seekers with information and tools to promote and access job openings, review changing labor market trends and opportunities, identify funding opportunities and fund education, training and support services. This requires partners to ensure privacy and security issues are addressed. Additionally, Illinois will continue to expand its resources for labor market information to ensure it accurately reflects the ever-changing environment within Illinois’ workforce. Information related to economic and labor market information is currently available online at the IDES Labor Market Information web page. Regional planning data is available

online at the 2020 Regional & Local Planning web page on the Illinois workNet portal. Information on WIOA training programs, providers and their performance history is available for jobseekers and students and career services staff at the Illinois workNet portal. DCEO, in partnership with IDES, continues development of online tools that link labor market information with Dun & Bradstreet data to help identify companies that may benefit from Title IB and Title III workforce system services.

Strategy 6: Advance Public-Private Data Infrastructure

Focusing on the IWIB Vision, the board will ensure measures are implemented that will guide Illinois through sustainable, systemic change to be prompt, agile and responsive to changing economic conditions. Working with the Interagency Data Team, in cooperation with the WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team, it will expand and improve the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the five strategies described above. This requires the integration of labor market information with state education and workforce longitudinal data systems, as well as program and case management systems. Labor market information from the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) was already matched with workforce program information from Commerce and also with education information from the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). In addition to bringing other partners into this data infrastructure, the team will also coordinate with the data analysis-related projects recommended through other related projects, such as the ICCB Workforce Education Strategic Plan, and the Community College Presidents' Council. This will also be an opportunity for the team to include the data experts at the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) as ISBE moves toward implementing policy recommendations that infuse demand-driven career pathway approaches into secondary curriculum. Finally, this will include coming to agreement on a methodology for establishing priority state- and regional-level industry sectors and occupational clusters as required by Governor Pritzker's EO3.

To assure that the IWIB can lead the efforts of Illinois in these six strategic areas, it has identified a need to strengthen the effectiveness and impact of its members and the membership of local workforce boards. Strategies will be developed to identify appropriate methods of outreach between the IWIB and local boards, as well as the technical assistance and resource needs that will allow board members to better understand their functions and responsibilities and ensure accountability in effectively conducting their business.

Strategies to address the needs of Targeted Populations

As stated in section II.c.2, the following strategies address the needs of targeted populations including but not limited to the long-term unemployed, individuals with disabilities, out-of-school youth, veterans, English language learners, low literacy adults and low-skilled adults.

Provide Economic Advancement for All Populations through Career Pathways

State and regional sector initiatives will provide the foundation for sector-based career pathway projects that expand career and educational opportunities for students and workers, including those facing multiple barriers to employment to achieve economic advancement. This will include a future emphasis on lifelong learning and allowing each participant to reach his or her full potential. The strategy is to help participants enter or re-enter the workforce by striking an individualized balance between rapid placement in self-sustaining employment and pursuit of a career pathway that may

require additional education and training along with work experience to continue progressing. Put more simply, the emphasis will shift from finding a job to developing a career.

Expand Service Integration

As stated in Section III.b.2, the IWIB has implemented a collaborative policy development process that will inform policy to promote movement along the service integration continuum. Examples of policy that will support this improved service integration include using data to ensure equity not only for underrepresented populations but ensuring equity in service delivery, integrated and enhanced career services, a holistic approach to assessment that includes identification of barriers to employment, and using individual career plans to coordinate services among partners. The Service Integration Policy Workgroup will continue to meet to refine current policy and develop new related to expanded service integration.

For example, the Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP) is a program in which eligible veterans receive employment service workshops while incarcerated in designated Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) facilities. Employment Security coordinates with IDOC to provide employment workshops for inmates that are within 18 months of their maximum release date and are eligible veterans. The IVTP workshops are facilitated by nine Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and place emphasis on job search techniques and resources to help these veterans address the unique employment barriers and other obstacles they will face when attempting to reenter the job market after their release.

Additionally, the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) serves people with disabilities who typically have additional barriers to employment beyond the presence of a disability. DRS case management system includes the Survey of Individual Needs, which addresses a variety of support needs that frequently present barriers to employment. Many people with disabilities have low incomes, and about one-third of DRS participants receive Social Security disability benefits. Long-term unemployment is a frequent condition for many people with disabilities, as is a poor work history and a lack of basic skills, along with limited English proficiency. The DRS program seeks to mitigate these barriers through supportive services alongside the provision of vocational services. Through participation in local workforce boards, DRS expects to expand its awareness of supportive services available throughout the community and make these available to people with disabilities as needed.

Promote Improved Data-Driven Decision Making

The Interagency Data Team will design, develop and use the statewide public-private data infrastructure (Strategy 6) to provide both employers and job seekers with tools to promote and access job openings, review changing labor market trends and opportunities, identify funding opportunities and fund education, training and support services. This will require partners to ensure that privacy and security issues are addressed. The intent is to create ways, such as dashboards, to transform the overwhelming amount of data into information that is both usable and actionable by program staff, job seekers, educators, students and parents. A current example of this strategy that can be emulated is the United States Department of Education (ED) College Scorecard

<https://collegescorecard.ed.gov>). This application makes it easier for students and parents to compare and evaluate colleges. We envision a similar approach to providing labor market information.

Advance Public-Private Data Infrastructure

The Interagency Data Team, in cooperation with the WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team, will expand and improve the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the five strategies described above. This requires the integration of labor market information (LMI) with state education and workforce longitudinal data systems, as well as program and case management systems. Just as with LMI dashboards, there is great potential to improve the ability of job seekers and students to assess and evaluate education and training programs, know which programs are more likely to lead to career pathways employment and in the end, help assess the potential return on investment for their available options.

Governor's Guidelines

Illinois has taken a proactive approach in developing guidelines and templates to document how the core programs, required programs and other resources can achieve the goal of fully integrating customer services. The IWIB was consulted regarding the work of the Interagency Technical Assistance Team on the "Governor's Guidelines to State and Local Program Partners for Negotiating Costs and Services," which fulfill the WIOA requirement that the Governor issue guidance to state and local partners for negotiating cost-sharing, service access, service delivery and other matters essential to the establishment of effective local workforce development services under WIOA (§678.705). The Governor's Guidelines address the negotiation of local memoranda of understanding (MOU), the negotiation of infrastructure costs, the negotiation of local one-stop delivery system costs, the timelines for negotiation of MOUs and infrastructure costs, and the reporting of interim and final negotiation outcomes and appeals processes. The core, required and optional partner program administrators in each local workforce area are included in the State of Illinois' MOU template, service matrix and budget worksheet.

The Governor's Guidelines to State and local WIOA program partners for negotiating cost-sharing, service access and integrated service delivery was originally issued in December 2015. The Governor's Guidelines have since been revised annually to incorporate final federal regulations and subsequent guidance, with the latest issuance in November 2019. The local partners, Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIB) and Chief Elected Officials (CEO) are expected to act in accordance with these guidelines and to otherwise comply with them. The scope of the Governor's Guidelines includes:

- Establish general guidance, direction and requirements for negotiating (MOU) that are required in each Local Workforce Innovation Area (LWIA) to support the operation of the local one-stop delivery system.
- Provide guidance related to Comprehensive One-Stop Center infrastructure costs, including guidance for budgeting, allocation, negotiation and reconciliation of these costs. Provide guidance for identifying and negotiating local one-stop delivery system costs that will be shared among required partners.

- Prescribe timelines for local negotiation of MOUs and for reporting of the outcomes of these negotiations.
- Outline requirements for the process through which required partners can appeal decisions made in the application of these guidelines if the state infrastructure cost funding mechanism is used.

Additionally, the Governor’s Guidelines include service matrices for career services and other programs and activities, demonstrating how career services and other programs are available through the local Comprehensive One-Stop Centers by required partner. To provide uniformity across the local areas, an MOU template is included in the Governor’s Guidelines. This template provides the structure and elements of the MOU, providing placeholders for each local area to add their respective content.

Regional and Local Planning and MOU Review

In 2016, the IWIB approved a process and a timetable for the coordinated and comprehensive review of regional plans, local plans and MOUs. This process has been reviewed and amended annually for regional and local planning and MOU development respectively as needed, based on the recommendations of the Interagency Technical Assistance Team.

- The review of regional and local plans and MOUs will assess:
 - Completeness of submission according to published guidance (i.e., Planning Guide and Governor’s Guidelines, Revision 4);
 - Whether the content in each area is adequate (i.e., thorough, complete, specific, relevant and consistent with regional and local plans and the Unified State Plan);
 - Commitment to integration;
 - Potential issues of compliance with federal requirements described in the final rule;
 - Program-specific issues that may need to be addressed by an individual partner or by the Interagency Leadership or Technical Assistance Teams;
 - Best or noteworthy practices; and
 - Suggestions from reviewers for improvement.
- Initial regional and local plans went into effect July 2016, just as WIOA final regulations were released. Following a joint review of plans by the core partners, the Interagency Work Group issued an updated regional and local planning guide and directed Local Workforce Innovation Boards to amend their plans with a modification effective July 2017. This modification incorporated edits the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board identified as required to bring plans into compliance with WIOA and final regulations. The most recent approved plans will remain in effect until June 2020. The local workforce innovation areas are beginning to work on the new plans with the launch of regional and local planning technical assistance having begun in August 2019 and new regional and local planning guidance released in October 2019.

Strategies to Strengthen Workforce Development Activities in Regard to Weaknesses

The comprehensive review of the regional and local plans and the MOUs will provide an updated baseline for continuous improvement and the implementation of the state's WIOA enhanced strategies at the regional and local levels. This process is ongoing to address the challenges of aligning the core, required and optional partners and other available resources. Additionally, the regional review process allows the state to make incremental progress in addressing challenges (weaknesses) of the workforce system in Illinois including:

- The quality of local career services
- The level of regional and local cross-program collaboration
- The willingness to pursue innovation at regional and local levels
- The level and quality of regional and local public-private sector partnerships
- The level and quality of employer engagement
- The level and quality of co-located, in-person services in Comprehensive One-Stop Centers
- Breaking through a service delivery model that is characterized by a silo approach
- Lack of a cohesive system to deliver data across the workforce system

Quality of Career Services

The quality of career services may be the most vital program element that determines the eventual success of our participants and businesses. Understanding this reality has prompted the core partners to agree that service standards must be established, and training must be provided.

As part of the coordinated career services approach, each participant will receive a holistic assessment to determine not only their career interests and potential barriers but their technical skill proficiency by identifying occupational skill gaps relevant to occupations in-demand in their region. The programs will coordinate services to address barriers and skill gaps while the individual is enrolled, as well as put in place supports for their ongoing successful employment.

Finally, each career services manager's client outcomes will be tracked for the purposes of identifying best practices that can be replicated across regions and programs.

Program staff must also better understand how to obtain and use the most current labor market information, including the characteristics of occupations, in order to assist participants in making informed career and training decisions. For example, when career services staff understands the actual occupational skills supply and demand in their region, they will be able to recommend training and education options more likely to lead to training-related employment.

Regional & Local Cross-Program Collaboration / Quality of Co-Located One-Stop Services / Dismantling the Service Delivery Silos

Illinois has created and implemented several teams that are built on both vertical and horizontal collaboration and initiatives that also encourage regional and local collaboration:

- Policy development teams are made up of state and local partners and include IWIB members and private sector employers; an example is the Service Integration Policy Workgroup.
- The WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team, which consists of core and required partner leaders, meets regularly to address implementation issues related to cross-program collaboration and co-located one-stop services.
- The WIOA Summit Planning Group is now focused on professional development at the regional level that will support information sharing while creating opportunities for cross-collaboration. Therefore, they have evolved into the Technical Assistance Planning Team to reflect their expanded activities.
- The Integrated Business Services Initiative has laid out a framework and strategy for locals to come together cohesively to address employer needs through the review of the Adult Education plans by the LWIBs.

Coordination of career services will require program staff to be better aware of the spectrum of services administered by all the programs. The core partners are implementing systemic, cross-program procedures where appropriate to ensure each participant receives every service for which they are eligible that is relevant to their securing employment.

Illinois continues to address the challenges of a geographically and economically diverse state where the coordination of career services and programs varies widely. Recognition of the geographic and diverse needs of this state have been emphasized in the EO3. The core partners concur on the need to establish rigorous service standards and provide adequate training to career services staff in all WIOA programs. This is especially important for services provided at a Comprehensive One-Stop Center. Policy will place an emphasis on individualized services, where the programs coordinate services designed to meet the individual where they are at on their career pathway and moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach. Policy and procedures have been developed and are being implemented to formally break down the silo approach by requiring cross-program integration of individualized assessment and services, among other activities.

Expand Employer and Job Seeker Access to Labor Market Information

The Interagency Data Team will design, develop and use the statewide public-private data infrastructure (Strategy 6) to provide both employers and job seekers with tools to promote and access job openings, review changing labor market trends and opportunities, identify funding opportunities and fund education, training and support services. This will require partners to ensure that privacy and security issues are addressed. The intent is to create ways, such as dashboards, to transform the overwhelming amount of data into information that is both usable and actionable by program staff, job seekers, educators, students and parents. A current example of this strategy that can be emulated is the United States Department of Education (ED) College Scorecard (www.collegescorecard.ed.gov). This application makes it easier for students and parents to compare and evaluate colleges. We envision a similar approach to providing labor market information.

Improve Public-Private Data Infrastructure

The Interagency Data Team, in cooperation with the WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team, will expand and improve the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the five strategies described above. This requires the integration of labor market information (LMI) with state education and workforce longitudinal data systems, as well as program and case management systems. Just as with LMI dashboards, there is great potential to improve the ability of job seekers and students to assess and evaluate education and training programs, know which programs are more likely to lead to career pathways employment and in the end, help assess the potential return on investment for their available options.

Coordinated Business Services

The ICCB Workforce and Education Strategic Planning Process and the WIOA Regional Planning Process confirmed that businesses demand coordinated services from the workforce, education and economic development system. Leveraging United States Department of Labor (DOL) technical assistance support, Illinois engaged the firm of Maher & Maher to assess current business services practices in the core programs. This project led to the IWIB adopting an Integrated Business Services Framework in 2017 to identify common goals and specific activities for each partner to undertake that will strengthen our ability to provide coordinated business services. This framework was created with input from the four core partners, the local workforce boards and economic development leaders. In 2018, the IWIB and the core partners will focus efforts on establishing the basic infrastructure to support integrated business services and providing technical assistance to LWIBs.

Experience has shown that areas of the state where local staff has established coordinated communication and services to businesses are more likely to have better outcomes for their participants and their employers. Public-private partnerships that are business-led are much more likely to be active and engaged and challenge the state and local education and workforce systems to keep up with their needs. Illinois' workforce and education partners have joined in several efforts designed to bring the interests of employers to the forefront. Regional strategic planning for ICCB and the community colleges, followed by sector strategies training and then by WIOA regional planning have all emphasized the importance of business engagement. Perhaps more importantly, these efforts highlighted the need for public sector follow through. Businesses disengage as soon as they perceive no return on their investment for participating in publicly funded initiatives.

Provide Career Pathways for Economic Advancement

State, regional, and local sector initiatives will provide the foundation for sector-based career pathway initiatives that expand career and educational opportunities for students and workers, including those facing multiple barriers to employment to achieve economic advancement. This will include an emphasis on lifelong learning and allowing each participant to reach his or her full potential. The strategy is to help each participant to make an informed decision as to how best to enter or re-enter the workforce based on his or her personal circumstances. By striking an individualized balance between finding a self-sustaining job as quickly as possible versus pursuing a career pathway that may require additional education and training to continue progressing up their career ladder. The emphasis will shift from finding a job to finding a career regardless of the entry point on the pathway.

Apprenticeships and work-based training programs are part of a larger strategy to help Illinois' companies develop their talent pipeline. As Illinois coordinates and aligns the strategy of apprenticeships with the P-20 education and workforce systems, and community colleges we are integrating a shared vision and language around Career Pathways. Illinois has been awarded several apprenticeship grants allowing the state to expand the scope and accelerate the pace of the growth of apprenticeships. Additionally, apprenticeships are a critical component of the Governor's Executive Order 3. Illinois has developed definitions that have been mutually agreed upon by relevant state agencies and committees to provide clarity to the broader fields of education and workforce development as programming and partnerships continue to develop and be implemented. 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, Every Student Succeeds Act and the Illinois Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act. These definitions have been approved by representatives of key state entities and boards pertaining to the broader education and workforce systems in Illinois. Collectively, these definitions establish a continuum of employer engagement and work-based learning experiences within a career pathway system.

Strategies to Address the Needs of Targeted Populations

Illinois has outlined the six interrelated strategies associated with the implementation of WIOA in Section II.c.1 of this plan. The specific strategies that address the needs of the populations targeted in Section II.a. (including, but not limited to, the long-term unemployed, individuals with disabilities, out-of-school youth, veterans, English language learners, low literacy adults and low-skilled adults) are summarized below. An example of how the system is evolving (taken from a local area plan) describes the positive relationship between the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services and the local Title IB staff.

The State of Illinois will utilize Statewide Activity funds to support Notice of Funding Opportunities to solicit proposals from eligible organizations capable of planning and implementing innovative projects that support the vision, principles, goals and strategies articulated within this Plan. Illinois will consider projects that:

- Develop strategies to effectively serve individuals with barriers to employment and to coordinate programs and services among workforce partners. Projects may include, but are not limited to, the coordination 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 USC 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 USC 796d), programs funded under Part B of Chapter 1 of Title VII of such Act (29 USC 796e et seq.), and activities carried out by the centers for independent living, as defined in section 702 of such Act (29 USC 796a);

- Adult education and literacy activities, including those provided by public libraries;
- Activities in the corrections system that assist returning citizens as they reenter the workforce; and
- Financial literacy activities.
- Support 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.

The Secondary Transition Experience Program (STEP) is part of the State's continuum of coordinated transition services for youth with disabilities. STEP is a training/placement program to help students with disabilities prepare for employment and community participation during and after high school. Students learn to become productive, self-sufficient adults through a variety of STEP experiences. These experiences include assisting students in the development of desirable work habits and realistic career goals. Students participate in pre-vocational classroom learning. Some students begin with on-campus work experiences. Most students participate in paid work experiences. Some of the students receive specialized job coach assistance. Throughout the year, some students participate in mock interviews with Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) staff and employers. Students are offered one-to-one interviews and receive individualized feedback on how they presented and responded to the interview situation. Students are also offered the opportunity to participate in guidance and career counseling and self-advocacy. During the month of October, DRS engages with individual employers to bring Disability Mentoring Day experiences to persons with disabilities. Participants can be secondary school students or adults. Participants are offered the opportunity to tour job sites, meet with employers and get hands-on experiences in the world of work.

III. Operational Planning Elements

a. State Strategy Implementation

III. a. 1. State Board Functions

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Illinois State Statutes require that the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) provide strategic leadership and oversight that will further the state's goals to meet the workforce needs of businesses and workers. Bylaws are in place to further guide the IWIB's work and processes. During 2018-2019, the IWIB initiated its strategic planning process to ensure the expanded functions under WIOA are carried out. This planning process moved the board from a tactical, operational approach to one where the members think strategically and serve as system leaders. The Unified State Plan for Illinois continues to be a tangible product resulting from the IWIB strategic planning process, in conjunction with priorities outlined in Governor JB Pritzker's EO 3, Illinois' Five-Year economic development plan, and multiple required state workforce and education state plans of system partners.

IWIB Strategic Plan

As reflected in this plan, a vision, mission and nine guiding principles were becoming the backdrop of all efforts by the board during the 2018-2020 plan implementation period. The principles focused on business engagement, customer-centered design, data & technology and board effectiveness with five primary objectives for the board. The objectives are:

- Accelerate and streamline communication with, and services to, business partners;
- Optimize the effectiveness of the one-stop system for all customers;
- Establish sustainable methods for high-quality data collection and accessible reporting;
- Increase board effectiveness through quality training and resources for the state board and local boards; and
- Promote board member accountability.

Ultimately, the objectives of the plan were further operationalized through a total of seventeen priority activities. Each activity was assigned to one of six current or future IWIB or system sub-groups to take the lead on implementation. An Information Technology Standing Committee and an Evaluation and Accountability Committee were formed in 2018 to address several objectives and priority activities. Attachment E

(<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20E%20-%20IWIB%20Report%20on%20Disadvantaged%20Youth.pdf>) is the current 2018-2020 IWIB Strategic Plan.

2019 also saw the transformation of the Disadvantaged Youth Standing Committee to the Career Pathways for Targeted Populations Committee. While disadvantaged youth are one of the priority populations of the system in Illinois, it was recognized that additional populations might be overlooked and the need to focus efforts on connecting all priority populations with the services, education, training, and supportive services necessary to succeed on a career path to gainful

employment was needed. The combination of focus on pathways and populations has already produced multiple discussions with key stakeholders in multiple key sectors. Early on, the co-chairs of this committee and that of the IWIB Apprenticeship Committee identified multiple areas of overlap and have been working closely together to ensure a collaborative approach to identifying and making recommendations for change that benefit job seekers, workers and employers.

While the Strategic Plan was a major undertaking, the IWIB continues to provide focused efforts through its structure of standing committees, task forces and policy work groups further outlined in the State Board Overview section of this plan. The IWIB continues to hold an annual retreat that provides additional opportunity for board member engagement in developing new priorities, coordinating board initiatives, identifying areas of necessary professional development, and most recently in 2019 beginning discussions on modifications to the current Strategic Plan. The board further expanded its meeting schedule in recognition of the need for continued consultation on strategic planning efforts, and to provide opportunities for coordinated discussions with local boards and businesses.

This was at the request of a newly formed Leadership Team. Comprised of members of the Executive Committee and Chairs of each Standing Committee, the Team meets monthly to identify opportunities for successful collaboration and plans for the future of the board. To date, they have developed a revised Vision and Mission to be incorporated into formal Modifications to the IWIB Strategic Plan to be implemented during 2020. Further, and with the help of the Continuous Improvement Committee, these leaders recognized the enormity of undertaking the current Strategic Plan and its nine guiding principles, four goal areas, five objectives and seventeen priority activities.

While much has been accomplished during the initial two years of the Strategic Plan implementation, the board has been unable to meet all of the priorities. This was a two-fold recognition: the IWIB with a considerably large investment of resources was unable to attend to all priorities successfully and effectively and considered reducing its priority areas to ensure accountability would be in a positive way, and allowance for new mandates from Federal or State leaders could be incorporated without unduly limiting the board's ability to meet a more focused set of priorities. Examples of mandates included the Executive Order and its implementation plan, as well as the creation of the new five-year economic development plan. Collaboration on the creation of strategic plans for Adult Education, ICCB workforce development and Perkins V reauthorization further eroded available resources of board members and its staff to address the original priorities.

In developing the new Vision and Mission of this Unified State Plan, the IWIB and state leaders from WIOA partners recognized (with the help of facilitation by the National Governors Association) that it is better to focus on fewer priorities that can truly be identified, implemented, and evaluated to assure success than to create an extensive list that may or may not be achievable in a positive way for Illinois. As such, the IWIB approved new priority areas to be incorporated into the strategic plan modifications.

1. Integrate service delivery improving access and opportunity for all populations.

2. Promote business demand-driven orientation, through a sector strategy framework, grounded in strong partnerships within business themselves and among business themselves and among businesses at all levels of the system.
3. Grow career pathways.
4. Monitor, track and assess clear metrics for progress and success informing continuous improvement and innovation efforts.
5. Hold ourselves as a board and system partners accountable for outcomes and transparency.

While the IWIB began strengthening local involvement in the policymaking process, the Strategic Plan modifications further emphasize the board's desire to build stronger partnerships and communication between the IWIB and local workforce boards. This will occur through direct communication between the IWIB Co-Chairs and board members and local workforce innovation boards (LWIB), invitations to jointly participate in state and local board meetings, and the development of an outreach plan to ensure that local boards understand and participate in Illinois' efforts to create a quality workforce, with a focus on the unique needs of each regional and local market. Technology solutions will be examined to facilitate and encourage better interaction among IWIB and LWIB members.

Beginning in late 2018, the IWIB committed to having its Chair and board members, supported by staff, attend LWIB meetings. Attendance has provided both an opportunity for the IWIB to speak and clarify its Strategic Plan elements and how they affect and should be considered by LWIBs, as well as allowed state board members to hear some of the concerns of employers at the local level. Following each of the meetings attended, the Executive Committee has taken up discussion regarding these concerns. The single strongest message received is that the IWIB and LWIBs need to continue to work more collaboratively so that guidance issued can truly address the needs of employers, because it is developed with employer input. This has been one of the driving forces behind creation of the Employer Engagement Committee.

Board Member Orientation and Outreach

Acting on several of the priorities found in the Strategic Plan, the IWIB began development of outreach and orientation for current and new members.

All of the work of the IWIB comes with the need to have fully engaged members. Revisions in 2019 to the IWIB By-Laws require that all members be actively participating on at least one standing committee, task force or work group, and that they attend their meetings, as well as the full IWIB quarterly meetings on a regular basis. Those unable to meet these obligations will be consulted by IWIB Executive Committee members to determine any necessary changes such as identification of more appropriate involvement or could lead to a request to replace the individual with a new appointment by the Governor's Office. Furthermore, a set of operational protocols are being developed to be implemented during 2020 to formalize structure and member composition of committees, task forces and work groups, provide a consistent set of standards to meeting conduct, and ensure all activities are consistent with board goals and expected outcomes.

To support a stronger, more involved board, the Executive Committee is developing a succession strategy for board members with the assistance of a former State Representative. This plan will address better outreach and collaboration among the IWIB and its appointed General Assembly members, as well as directly with the Governor's Office. Success in this area will lead to a more visible board within the workforce system across the State, which will also strengthen the ability of the board to be involved in legislative developments that are more aligned with the system needs.

A new orientation process will ensure new members are provided the information necessary to effectively participate in the activities of the board by more thoroughly understanding key tenets and functions of a state board under WIOA, the one-stop system in Illinois, the services and programs available by partners, and expectations as board members. A Member's Manual will outline all of the information and processes, including state statutes and guidance that apply to appointed boards. This will be a "living" document, revised as necessary to reflect current information and data. A budget worksheet will provide information on the resources available under direction of the board and mandated training that appointed members, similar to those of state employees, must comply with annually. Another tool to inform new members will be a mentoring program to connect them with long-standing board members with similar interests by sector or geography. This will provide them with an immediate resource to past history of the board and a better understanding of its direction moving forward.

Committees, Task Forces and Work Groups

The IWIB continues its structure of utilizing standing committees, task forces and work groups to further expand collaborative efforts in Illinois by inviting employer and stakeholder engagement in the operation of the state workforce system. This structure was established to ensure that board members remain engaged in furthering the identification and understanding of root causes in workforce and economic development challenges, and to provide opportunities for consultation and input from those directly connected to and actively involved with the system. Staff from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) coordinate support to these bodies. In addition, the IWIB utilizes resources from WIOA partner agencies and state universities to support its work.

The IWIB continuously evaluates the success of its structure and has created new (and put on hiatus existing) sub-groups as necessary to ensure appropriate focus on the most important priorities and activities. Moving into the new Unified State Plan cycle, the IWIB has deactivated the Information Technology Committee with reassignments of necessary activities to other committees, work groups, or other workforce and education initiative-based groups and initiated the Employer Engagement Committee. This committee will provide a direct resource to support the business-driven model Illinois' workforce and education systems seek.

Committees are generally longstanding groups that conduct regularly occurring business on behalf of the IWIB and are designed to focus on long-term issues and strategies. Task forces, on the other hand, are short-term and goal-oriented bodies that are appointed to achieve articulated outcomes by a specified date and employ highly engaged membership and staff support to accomplish those outcomes.

Work Groups are utilized to develop and revise policies that direct system operations for local workforce boards, agency partners, one-stop centers & operators and service providers. At any given time, there have been as many as five policy work groups engaged in one element or another in the policy development and implementation process. Each are approved by the IWIB through action items that detail the objectives and timeframes (if appropriate) of the group. They are comprised of members of the IWIB, local boards and chief elected officials, business and core agency partners, in addition to identified stakeholders throughout the state. Going forward, and further outlined within this Plan, the IWIB will be addressing no less than the following priority areas of policy development and revision: service integration, one-stop certification, eligible training providers and demand occupations, and local workforce innovation board composition and staffing models.

The IWIB Executive Committee is responsible for establishing the committees, task forces and work groups and designating the members of these working bodies, subject to the approval of the full IWIB. While the IWIB encourages wide participation from stakeholders, a Chair, selected from among current IWIB business members, is identified for each Committee and Task Force to ensure continued effective, efficient and focused efforts on the IWIB's behalf. Chairs are encouraged for work groups as well. Recently, the IWIB held discussions and approved a process whereby a Co-Chair can be identified to lead and support the work of the standing committees. A Co-Chair can be a representative of the system with intimate knowledge and experience of the committee work and does not have to be selected from among IWIB members. This allowance provides for the ability to support areas of system development that a board member might not have as a strength.

IWIB members have increased their alignment with education groups within the state to build strong linkages that will expand work-based learning opportunities and open career pathways for all learners. Building these strong linkages is part of the board's role as a system leader, and supports further alignment of the education, workforce and economic development vision. IWIB representatives actively participate in the Illinois P-20 Council, the Illinois Pathways Advisory Council and the Higher Education Commission on the Future of the Workforce, as well as the technical assistance work group on New Skills for Youth and the 21st Century Workforce Advisory Fund Board. IWIB members also participate in the Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeship and Pathways (WRAP) and Integrated Business Services teams. IWIB staff provide information to the board related to other workforce, education and economic development efforts occurring throughout the state in an effort to assist them in better understanding their roles and how they can affect continuous improvement opportunities throughout the system.

III. a. 2. Implementation of State Strategy

A. Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy

Six policy strategies were developed to reach the goals of the Unified State Plan. Attached to each strategy are specific implementation activities that leverage the collective experience of the core and required partners and build upon the experience gained through public and private sector innovation initiatives. The core partner programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) are fully committed to achieving improved service delivery through program alignment. Under the direction of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) and the Interagency Leadership Team each program is working together to assess how services overlap and to identify opportunities for

improved service alignment in support of the state strategies. This effort extends beyond the core partners to also include one-stop required partners in efforts to assess and improve service integration, such as: service integration policy and local area self-assessment and action plans.

Since the passage of WIOA, the core partners have contributed funding, staff and facilities to strengthen the state and regional labor market information shared with the workforce system; established strategic planning frameworks for community colleges and WIOA programs; collaborated to develop a service integration policy and implementation plan, and enhanced integrated business services through the work of the Integrated Business Services Workgroup. As WIOA was in the initial implementation phase, the Illinois Community College Board was engaged in the development of a Workforce Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for community colleges, adult education, career and technical education, and corporate training. Core partners and other entities were a part of the development of the plan. As a result, the strategies identified under the WESP are in alignment with the Unified Plan's strategic priorities.

The ICCB is in phase Two of the implementation with a survey designed to capture what the community colleges are doing under each of the four strategic directions. Additionally, the Illinois State Board of Education and ICCB are developing the Perkins V State Plan with input from core partners and other entities to ensure alignment with the state WIOA implementation strategies.

Strategy 1: Coordinate Demand-Driven Strategic Planning at the State and Regional Levels

The state continues to coordinate a demand-driven strategic planning process across education, workforce and economic development at the state, regional and local levels. This process is built upon current state and regional planning initiatives and utilizes the resources of the core state agency partners and other partners, including the economic development arm of Commerce. Recently Governor Pritzker's Economic Development Plan was released and WIOA partners are in the process of aligning strategies with the Governor's plan, through this Unified State Plan. This process will include new and ongoing activities that provide support for regional planning and provide the basis for implementing the strategies - especially regional sector partnerships.

Activity 1.1: Develop Strategic Indicators, Benchmarks and Related Planning Data Resources

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) continues its research and identification of the tools and measures necessary to (a) determine whether the Unified State Plan and other WIOA requirements are being carried out effectively, and (b) identify opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Illinois' workforce development system. This committee serves as a resource to other IWIB committees in establishing standards and metrics to assess and continuously improve system and program performance.

During its first year, the committee created a framework for its activities. Moving forward for the accountability component, the committee will map the components of the Unified State Plan to the work being carried out by all of the IWIB committees and the system, in general, to ensure activities outlined are being addressed effectively. Much of the work of the CIC, like the IWIB as a whole, will focus on service integration and the many goal areas of the recent policy. Beginning with reviews of the service integration self-assessments, identification of best practices will be the basis for developing further policy and professional development plans. The CIC is also identifying continuous

improvement opportunities following a review of the common WIOA performance measures for the core partners and making recommendations in strategies that the entire system can learn from and implement.

Going forward, the committee is looking at larger questions related to evaluation and performance. It should be noted that the focus of the CIC is not to monitor local boards and one-stop systems, but to evaluate and assess outcomes to identify indicators of successful performance outcomes and make recommendations that can be implemented statewide. The committee will review the research agendas of various components of the system and identify opportunities to strengthen alignment and prioritization of research questions. The availability of the Illinois Longitudinal Data System and the Comprehensive Demographic Dataset, the 2017 Talent Flow Analysis pilot project and the 2017 Workforce Innovation Fund Impact Evaluation provided resources and examples of new ways of using data for evaluation and research opportunities to support system improvement.

The work of the CIC will be critical in updating resources and planning guidelines in advance of the 2020 regional and local plans. Illinois has updated its model for resources developed for the 2016 regional and local plans utilizing again the regional data packets of industry and occupational demand and pathway supply/demand analyses, key indicators of business growth and location, labor force participation and unemployment rates with current data and labor market information. The partners will use the updated projections to identify in-demand industries and occupations for the 2020 regional and local plans. The planning resources also utilized United States Census data to estimate the size and characteristics of the population and labor force, including targeted populations under this plan who are facing multiple barriers to employment. For example, WIOA Title II Adult Education programs are required to align Integrated Education and Training and Bridge programming with in-demand industries as identified through the regional and local plans.

In order to effectively address the increasing need to conduct meaningful evaluations, the CIC will rely on information and tools learned from an Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort project facilitated by the Department of Labor - Employment & Training Administration that began in late 2019. Illinois applied to be part of the Cohort project and has been accepted as one of the few States selected. Learning from the experienced evaluators, state and national subject matter experts, and other selected states will provide a collaborative forum for developing evaluation action plans. Many resources have been identified that will be the basis of required activities such as an Evaluation Toolkit, Evaluation Readiness Assessment and Evaluation Design Assessment. Knowledge and experience of experts in the field of workforce evaluations, as well as from the Cohort states will be sought to support the IWIB efforts and shared with system stakeholders as recommendations, policies and guidance are developed.

Tables 16a and 16b show regional employment across industry sectors and are the basis for Figures 2a and 2b. In each case, the intention was for the regional planning groups to review and analyze this data in order to help identify sectors for which regional sector talent pipeline projects might be most appropriate.

Table 16a: Northeast Region Employment by Industry/Occupational Cluster

NORTHEAST REGION					
EMPLOYMENT BY MAJOR INDUSTRY CATEGORY					
NAICS Title	2016 Employment	Projected 2026 Employment	Net Employment Change 2016-2026	Percent Employment Change	Concentration (Location Quotient)
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	4,563,862	4,852,016	288,154	6.3%	
Self Employed Workers	189,988	189,645	(323)	-0.2%	0.75
Agricultural Production	10,890	10,794	104	1.0%	0.16
Natural Resources & Mining	1,386	1,357	(29)	-2.1%	0.07
Construction	154,576	169,978	15,402	10.0%	0.75
Manufacturing	376,570	387,520	10,950	2.9%	1.05
Wholesale Trade	235,385	253,942	18,557	7.9%	1.42
Retail Trade	429,723	440,934	11,211	2.6%	0.96
Utilities	12,754	13,210	456	3.6%	0.81
Transportation & Warehousing	216,533	236,881	20,348	9.4%	1.41
Information	79,064	76,937	(2,127)	-2.7%	0.99
Financial Activities	297,293	305,504	8,211	2.8%	1.22
Professional & Business Services	789,616	869,155	79,539	10.1%	1.33
Educational Services	382,081	389,180	7,099	1.9%	*
Health Care & Social Assistance	546,828	602,438	55,610	10.2%	0.97
Leisure & Hospitality	433,597	493,027	59,430	13.7%	0.94
Other Services	189,786	190,333	547	0.3%	1.01
Government	218,012	221,181	3,169	1.5%	*

Financial Activities and Transportation & Warehousing are highly concentrated here. Professional and Business Services are expected to be the greatest source of job growth (and overall employment) in this region, while also being a highly concentrated industry.

* LQs for Educational Services and Government are not displayed due to discrepancies in how different BLS data sources treat these industry classifications.

Leading Industries
Emerging Industries
Maturing Industries

Table 16b: Southwest Region Employment by Industry/Occupational Cluster

SOUTHWEST REGION					
EMPLOYMENT BY MAJOR INDUSTRY CATEGORY					
NAICS Title	2016 Employment	Projected 2026 Employment	Net Employment Change 2016- 2026	Percent Employment Change	Concentration (Location Quotient)
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	270,590	286,487	15,897	5.9%	
Self Employed Workers	14,333	14,584	251	1.8%	0.96
Agricultural Production	5,685	5,740	55	1.0%	1.46
Natural Resources & Mining	442	441	(1)	-0.2%	0.38
Construction	11,995	14,068	2,073	17.3%	0.98
Manufacturing	22,348	20,011	(2,337)	-10.5%	1.05
Wholesale Trade	9,411	10,951	1,540	16.4%	0.96
Retail Trade	31,904	32,735	831	2.6%	1.20
Utilities	1,787	1,886	99	5.5%	1.92
Transportation & Warehousing	16,319	19,273	2,954	18.1%	1.79
Information	2,254	1,985	(269)	-11.9%	0.47
Financial Activities	9,585	9,612	27	0.3%	0.67
Professional & Business Services	21,046	22,970	1,924	9.1%	0.60
Educational Services	25,483	26,346	863	3.4%	*
Health Care & Social Assistance	35,478	38,712	3,234	9.1%	1.06
Leisure & Hospitality	29,367	33,605	4,238	14.4%	1.07
Other Services	12,267	12,550	283	2.3%	1.10
Government	20,886	21,018	132	0.6%	*

Transportation & Warehousing and Utilities are the sectors with the most highly concentrated employment in this region. Transportation & Warehousing is expected to create significant employment growth over the projection period as well.

* LQs for Educational Services and Government are not displayed due to discrepancies in how different BLS data sources treat these industry classifications.

Leading Industries
Emerging Industries
Maturing Industries

Figure 2a: Major Industry Clusters in the Northeast Region

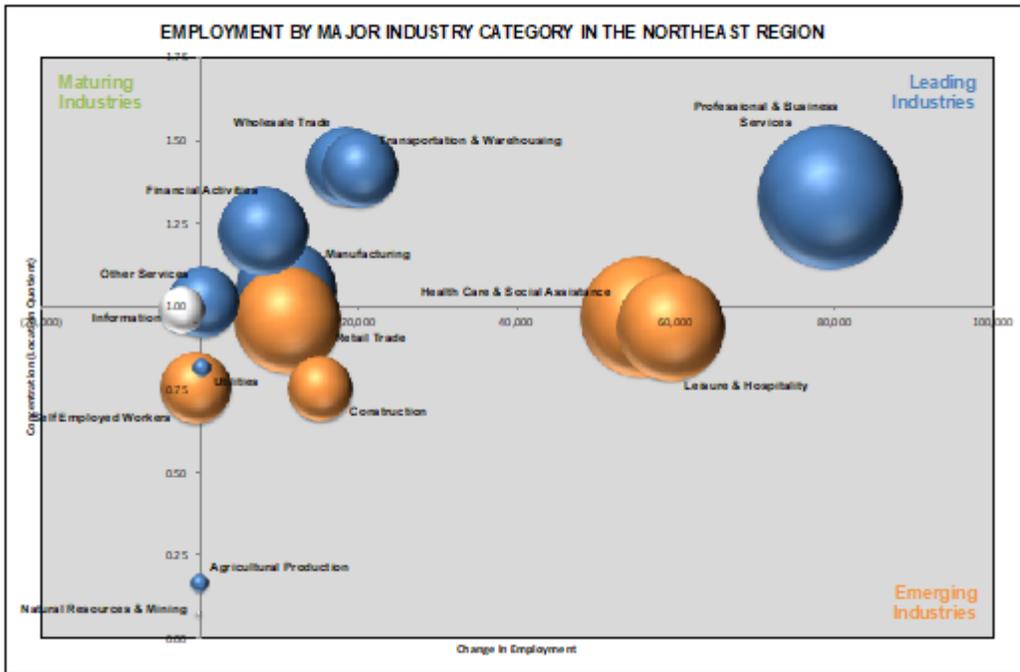
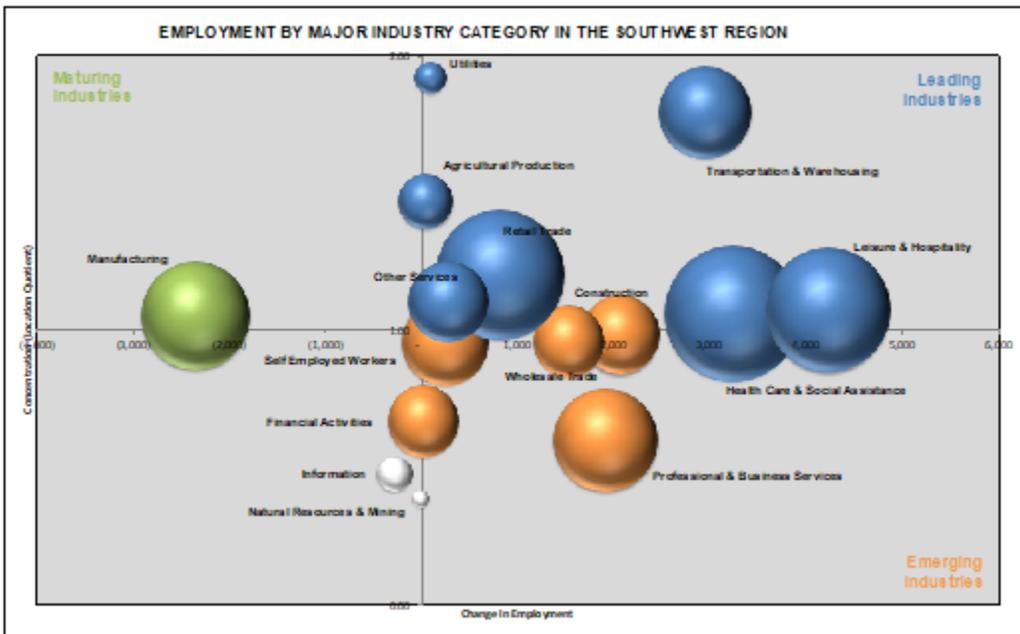


Figure 2b: Major Industry Clusters in the Southwest Region



Activity 1.2: Establish Regional Planning Areas

Governor Pritzker determined that Illinois’ ten economic development regions will continue to serve as the regional planning areas that are required by Section 106 of the WIOA to engage in joint

planning, integrate service delivery, share administrative costs and enter into regional coordination efforts with economic development agencies operating in the same region. The ten economic development regions were established in 2003 based on an analysis of labor market information and several other data factors including statewide commuting patterns surrounding major and minor metropolitan centers. These ten regions include the 22 LWIAs and 102 counties.

The state continues to recommend that Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) and Local Workforce Innovation Boards review the patterns in WIOA funding, participant service levels, and administrative costs and consider how these will impact service delivery and the ability to meet administrative requirements. The state has acknowledged the many efforts already undertaken to streamline operations in order to provide more efficient service delivery to the workforce system. The state continues to encourage CEOs to consider a voluntary consolidation of LWIAs as an option to provide as much funding as possible for direct client services. A small number of LWIAs had counties that extended into adjacent economic development regions. Three counties voluntarily realigned to adjacent LWIAs effective July 1, 2019, which allowed four LWIAs to now align with their regional planning area. The IWIB will continue working with local CEOs and LWIB chairs to address the few remaining outlier counties.

Activity 1.3: Conduct Integrated Regional Planning

The state has developed and supported an integrated regional planning process that is coordinated with local area planning in each of the ten regions. As required by WIOA, this planning process includes determinations of how Local Workforce Innovation Boards will engage in the joint development and implementation of regional sector initiatives. In the spring of 2015, ICCB and state agency partners established the foundations for regional planning throughout Illinois through the process of developing an ICCB Workforce Education Strategic Plan. The process addressed workforce and education needs across the state to adapt to changing economic and student needs within the ten planning regions and 39 community college districts. The data from this project has been updated and used in other regional planning efforts including, the IWIB Strategic Plan and the Adult Education Strategic Plan.

The state worked with the IWIB, the WIOA Executive Leadership Team and local partners to develop regional planning workshops and a statewide summit in 2016 to support the regional planning process. Regional planning addressed the alignment and integration of education, workforce and economic development resources, the identification of opportunities for sector initiatives, and partnerships that will promote business and expand career opportunities for more people in the region. The regional plans also identified opportunities for the coordination and delivery of services. The integration of services was a focus of Illinois' 2019 WIOA Summit that included more than 400 attendees. A deeper dive into service integration implementation will be the focus of the 2020 WIOA Summit.

The Interagency Technical Assistance Team developed a coordinated Regional & Local Plan / One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding review process that includes a formal report and technical assistance review for each of the ten Economic Development Regions and twenty-two local workforce areas. It is important to note that the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Department of Human Services

Division of Rehabilitation Services and Illinois Community College Board are all actively engaged in this ongoing process. The Interagency Technical Assistance Team created an online dashboard that provides the status of each plan (and MOU) and allows the public to view and download the documents. All regional and local plans may be viewed at: https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning/Pages/Plans_MOUs_Dashboard.aspx.

The Interagency Technical Assistance Team developed and issued updated guidance for WIOA regional and local planning to the field in October 2019.

Strategy 2: Support Employer-Driven Regional Sector Initiatives

Illinois has been actively engaged in sectoral work and sector strategies for over a decade. In 2006, Illinois was one of six states invited to participate in the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices Sector Strategies Learning Academy funded by the Mott, Ford and Joyce Foundations. The initial policy recommendations resulting from this effort remain valid today: a) promote regionalism; b) increase funding opportunities; c) use data to drive decisions; d) align resources and strategies; e) present opportunities for unified messages; and f) build legislative support. State and regional strategic planning activities will align education, workforce and economic development and lay the foundation for employer-driven regional sector initiatives.

The IWIB adopted a guiding principle directing their efforts towards business demand-driven orientation through a sector strategy framework, grounded in strong partnerships within and among businesses throughout the system. The premise is that business needs dictate the system responses, and the system should be developed in such a way that it addresses those business needs. Identifying the appropriate sectors in each region ensures limited dollars are more wisely directed toward the leading and emerging occupations.

These efforts are being addressed through two newly formed standing committees. In 2018, the IWIB revised the Disadvantaged Youth Standing Committee to more broadly address all priority populations and provide a framework around service provision through career pathways when it created the Career Pathways for Targeted Populations Standing Committee. In 2019, the IWIB created an Employer Engagement Standing Committee to better receive input from employers across the State and among all key sectors, as well as develop a mechanism for input by state and local board members related to their needs and constituent employment and training needs.

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) continued the implementation of the Workforce Education Strategic Plan (WESP) by creating workgroups, such as one focused on “essential skills,” for employers and workers in Illinois, led by Adult Education. This workgroup developed an Essential Skills Framework that is being used statewide. In addition, the ICCB has developed a Strategic Plan for adult education that aligns with the IWIB Unified State and Strategic Plans, as well as the ICCB Workforce Education Strategic Plan. Each of the Plans used workgroups made up of diverse partners to build out and work around the findings of the employers’ input.

Activity 2.1: Promote Employer-Driven Regional Sector Partnerships

The WIOA Integrated Business Services Work Group, with direction from the IWIB, will work to expand the statewide policy framework that operationalizes the goals and guiding principles of

employer-driven sector partnerships developed through the national Sector Strategies Technical Assistance initiative. The sector strategies framework (Attachment G) (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20G%20-%20Illinois%20Sector%20Partnership.pdf>) describes how state and regional resources can be used to launch, expand and support employer-led partnerships. The core partners will implement strategies based on the framework and other leading national and state employer-driven models, such as those developed with the support of the NGA Sector Strategies Learning Academy, the Workforce Innovation Fund and the United States Chamber of Commerce’s Talent Pipeline Management Initiative.

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) will continue to promote employer-led sector strategies via technical assistance regarding the Illinois Next Generation Sector Strategies Framework, and sector partnerships related to Talent Pipeline Management. Beginning in 2016 and continuing, Commerce staff conducts informational sessions on sector partnerships: (a) at state and regional events held by the workforce system, (b) local chamber of commerce executives, (c) rural economic development professionals, (d) business and industry groups, and (e) regional economic development organizations and local chapters of the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM).

Beginning In 2019, Commerce embedded the six Talent Pipeline Management strategies, the first of which is the formation of regional sector-based employer collaboratives, into apprenticeship expansion grants. All grantees sent a team to a US Chamber Academy for training in how to implement the strategies, and we anticipate requesting an in-state academy to bring US Chamber faculty to Illinois for training leaders in interested communities.

Activity 2.2: Promote Sector-Based Business Services and Employer Initiatives

As required by WIOA 101(d)(3)(iv) the IWIB, working through its various committees, teams, and work groups, will partner with state and regional economic development agencies, business and industry groups, local workforce areas and one-stop partners to better align and integrate business services among the core programs and required one-stop partners. In December 2017, the IWIB approved the Integrated Business Services Framework developed by the Integrated Business Services Workgroup and business engagement staff with the support of DOL technical assistance funding. By January 2018, this group developed and prioritized implementation goals for the next two years. The goals range from macro-level (Define “business engagement”) to micro-level (Explore business-customer tracking systems for use across partners). Some of the goals, such as “Establish a high-level interagency management team to provide collaborative leadership to front-line staff” and “developing and providing tools” for field staff have already been met.

Going forward, the Integrated Business Services Workgroup will continue providing support for these integrated business service teams through guides and tools, as well as professional development and training. The workgroup has become a subgroup of the newly formed IWIB Employer Engagement Standing Committee. This will allow decisions on business service delivery to be more coordinated with the discussions by employers regarding their current needs. The State workgroup partnered with the Service Integration Team to embed business services into the first local Service Integration Self-Assessment project in 2019. This action, along with subsequent local plans to improve service integration ensures that integrated business services will remain a part of ongoing

efforts in the field. These integrated business services strategies will be complemented by related initiatives to jointly leverage funding, including an emphasis on private sector investment, to support employer-driven sector initiatives, including how to leverage local area funds for OJT and incumbent worker training, and WIOA rapid response and layoff aversion funds for business retention. The focus is on providing practical guidance to regional stakeholders to develop integrated business services to employers in industries and occupations that are identified as in-demand through the state and regional planning process.

Strategy 3: Provide Economic Advancement for all Populations through Career Pathways

The IWIB continues to strengthen alignment with education groups in an effort to advance career pathways for all individuals to prepare them for economic self-sufficiency. In Illinois, the Illinois P-20 Council (P represents preschool and 20 stands for grade 20, education after college), which has a business membership emphasis, has become the venue to develop a framework to better align the state's education systems. The IWIB Business Co-Chair plays a major role in the council and is the chair of the P-20 Council's School, College and Career Readiness Committee. This uniquely positions the IWIB to facilitate connections between workforce, education and business and industry partners. The IWIB will also be in a position to create a common set of expectations, assumptions and definitions that will enable the alignment of career pathways programs and build a stronger talent pipeline across all populations. Additionally, the IWIB Business Co-Chair and state legislative members of the IWIB were actively engaged in work with the Board of Higher Education and other education partners to ensure that practices and policy recommendations to increase post-secondary education attainment and address regional workforce needs are embedded into WIOA implementation strategies. Going forward the P-20 Council will be increasing its focus to increase business engagement and ensure strategies include employer voices to meet their needs for a skilled workforce.

The Illinois Community College Board, through its Adult Education and Career and Technical Education Divisions, has developed model strategies to assist individuals with multiple barriers to employment. For example, ICCB has created and implemented Pre-bridge, Bridge, and Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs, such as I-CAPS (Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System) that are designed to improve access to training for in-demand occupations for very-underserved populations. There are now two models: I-CAPS 1 (credit) and I-CAPS 2 (industry-recognized credentials). ICCB has added the Integrated English Language Civics education to ensure ESL programs have the support to fully integrate workplace and IET programs in the ESL classroom. Another example includes the ICCB's partnership with the Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support and the Office of Community College Research and Leadership, whose roles include offering professional development and technical assistance to the community colleges and other applicable partners on advancing equity and adequately serving "special populations", as determined by the Perkins Act, in career pathway programs. With the implementation of three strategic plans, the Workforce Education Strategic Plan, the Adult Education Strategic Plan, and the Perkins V CTE Plan, the ICCB will identify strategies and goals that address early interventions, transition to postsecondary education and employment and college and career readiness.

Policies and practices recommended from these efforts will be operationalized through current and future state and regional sector initiatives, such as those mentioned below in Activity 3.1. This will

provide the foundation for sector-based career pathway initiatives that expand career and educational opportunities for students and workers, including those facing multiple barriers to employment.

Activity 3.1: Promote Leading Career Pathway Models and Best Practices

Illinois' current efforts to align education, workforce and economic development are providing a solid foundation to promote leading career pathway models and best practices. Career pathway development in Illinois is being expanded to encompass every level of the education system and to meet the needs of our diverse populations, including those that face multiple barriers to achieving self-sufficiency. To that end, Illinois has adopted a unified definition for Career Pathways to ensure a connection with current state initiatives, programs and services. Each agency incorporates this definition into guidelines to ensure a consistent message is understood throughout the state. Across the system, Illinois is piloting and/or creating solutions to implement these models and to develop policy recommendations such as:

- Defining Career Pathways for the workforce and education system, across multiple partners and through board actions across the IWIB, the Illinois Community College Board (Community Colleges), the Illinois Board of Higher Education (Public and Private Universities), the Illinois State Board of Education (K-12), the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, as well as the Department of Human Services.
- The IWIB Disadvantaged Youth/Adults Standing Committee (Youth Committee) was reconstituted as the Career Pathways for Targeted Populations Committee. This committee is focusing on the targeted populations identified within the Unified State Plan to develop strategies and initiatives that provide career pathways for Illinois' most vulnerable individuals. Working with businesses, the education system, local workforce agencies and other interested stakeholders, business-driven talent solutions will be developed that build off previous years of success, such as Illinois Pathways and the Illinois 60 by 25 Network, which served to pursue scaling of career pathways.
- Engaging in professional development activities that emphasize the integrated nature of career pathways, including topics such as curriculum integration, academic and career advising across K-12 and community colleges through counselor training, Special Populations Academies and summits on nontraditional careers.
- Defining High-Quality Credentials that will place equal importance on industry-recognized credentials and creating a definition for high quality that is based on sector-demand and self-sustaining wage data.
- Determining the criteria for eligible training providers that will align data collection and program approval processes to the Career Pathways to improve informed customer choice.
- Creating, community and regional collaborations, such as "60 by 25" Communities and P-20 Regional Networks, seeking ways to increase college and career success for students through regional action toward a state target of increasing adults in Illinois with high-quality degrees and credentials to sixty percent by 2025 (60 by 25).

- Developing sector-based approaches with community-based organizations serving SNAP and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients.
- ICCB initiatives, including Integrated Education and Training programs (IET). The IET program provides low-skilled adults enrolled in Title II: Adult Education and Literacy with an opportunity to gain basic skills or work towards a high school equivalency while enrolling concurrently in a Career Technical Education program. Individuals enrolled in an IET program will receive instruction that is contextualized to a specific sector and includes employability/workforce preparation skills and a technical training program (i.e., welding). Individuals completing the IET program may earn an industry-recognized credential(s), a college certificate and college credit. Under this model, individuals can earn credentials within a year, depending on the program.
- Expanding strategies for career pathway initiatives for individuals with disabilities.
- Commerce supporting awareness of best and promising practices for local staff and providing technical assistance to foster their integration into the regular WIOA local workflow.
- The Service Integration Policy Work Group modeling resource leveraging by building on the Illinois DRS Technical Assistance Grant received from the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC), funded by the United States Department of Education. A key focus of WINTAC Activity is service integration. Through WINTAC, the model is using the five stages and six core functions for service integration. Three sub-workgroups formed around the six core functions will be exploring policy and implementation best practices to achieve service integration.

These efforts, as well as others, will inform the state regarding the expansion of career pathway approaches that can be implemented through regional sector partnerships and other regional sector initiatives. Policy recommendations, professional development and technical assistance are central in addressing how to incorporate these pathway approaches into the improvement of career services and the expansion of access to accelerated and integrated work-based and classroom training, aligned and integrated programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials, and support services for targeted populations facing barriers to employment. Additionally, career pathway approaches will include strategies for fully mainstreaming targeted populations to provide access to self-sustaining wages and career advancement.

Activity 3.2: Expand and Improve Bridge and Integrated Education and Training Models

The state agency partners will focus on expanding access and success in sector-based bridge programs that provide opportunities for youth and adults with low skills and low literacy. The state will support new and expanded initiatives that promote sector-based pre-bridge, bridge programs and integrated education and training models that increase access and success for low-skilled youth and adults in career pathways. These programs are designed to introduce individuals to career pathway programs of interest. A common state definition of bridge programs was developed to ensure all core and required partners have a basic understanding of the provisions of services under these programs. The state recognizes the use of bridge programs as a foundation for career pathway systems and also as a foundation for employment opportunities and other training.

The strategic plan for adult education, “Expanding Career Pathway Opportunities in Adult Education,” engaged multiple partners in the plan development process. The plan expands opportunities for individuals, including those who lack basic literacy, English and foundational skills necessary to access in-demand employment. The ICCB will continue to seek ways in which the Adult Education Plan can be aligned to other plans of statewide significance.

Activity 3.3: Promote Innovative Career Pathway Solutions

As stated above in Activity 3.1, Illinois’ adoption of a statewide definition for career pathways lays a solid foundation for career pathway models for all populations. One example in promoting innovation in career pathway solutions will be an increased emphasis on solutions for youth with barriers. Informed by the work of the IWIB Career Pathways for Targeted Populations Standing Committee (previously the IWIB Disadvantaged Youth Task Force), state agency partners will use demonstrations and pilot projects to guide policy recommendations through activities such as:

- Exploring opportunities to expand career pathways for out-of-school youth, adults, and other priority populations, through the blending of federal and state funding;
- Supporting education efforts to design and implement rigorous, demand-driven college and career pathway systems extending from secondary and postsecondary aligned with the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act;
- Developing joint projects between adult education programs, local workforce boards and others in areas such as aligning WIOA Title I services with efforts that currently address justice-involved youth. Illinois is exploring a range of career pathway models seen nationally and statewide as exemplary practices and examining ways to braid and blend funding for maximum impact. Where possible these models will be folded into existing juvenile justice efforts for seamless service alignment to add the expertise of WIOA service providers to strengthen employment and training models.
- Creating service alignment for foster youth, including youth who are aging out of the foster care system. The Departments of Commerce and Children and Family Services are developing an initiative to expand career pathway services to older foster youth who are nearing age-out. Successful models for braiding and blending WIOA and Chafee Foster Care Funds are under consideration as a basis for Illinois’ effort.

Activity 3.4: Promote the Use of All Types of Apprenticeships

Our 2016 WIOA Unified State Plan predicted, “With increased attention given to various forms of work-based learning, apprenticeships are expected to become more common as WIOA is implemented.” This proved to be quite accurate as enrollment in WIOA-funded apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships in Illinois skyrocketed. Pre-apprenticeship enrollment increased exponentially each year between PY15 and PY18, with single-year growth rates in this period ranging from 134% to 226%.

Chart 16



This growth is largely due to the work of the IWIB Apprenticeship Standing Committee to plan for a comprehensive and integrated apprenticeship system in Illinois, oversee its implementation and performance, and recommend improvements. The IWIB is committed to using registered, non-registered and pre-apprenticeships as a key strategy to build a pipeline of skilled workers to help businesses throughout the state remain competitive. This committee will continue to be the key resource for the IWIB to identify policies, resources, opportunities and roadblocks as Illinois seeks to establish a comprehensive “scaffold” of pathways around and towards Registered Apprenticeships.

Additionally, the Illinois Community College System has seen the growth of apprenticeships, both registered, non-registered and pre-apprenticeships. Initiatives at Harper College and City Colleges of Chicago have been focused on apprenticeships in insurance and finance while the Highway Construction Careers Training program has focused on pre-apprenticeship preparation in the highway and construction trades. The ICCB will be expanding apprenticeships, registered, non-registered and pre-apprenticeships, by over 1700 in information technology over the next four years through the Department of Labor Scaling Apprenticeships through Sector-based Initiatives grant.

Illinois will learn from the best practices out of the Apprenticeship USA pilot projects, including the Illinois Manufacturers’ Association Education Foundation Advanced Apprenticeship Consortium project. These and the subsequent Apprenticeship Expansion Grants received by the Title I program and additional funding received by ICCB to expand apprenticeship programs are directly responsible

for the rapid growth in Illinois. The continued expansion of apprenticeships will be encouraged and supported with WIOA Statewide Activities funds through the Illinois Talent Pipeline and Youth Career Pathways Programs. Similarly, the State's Perkins Plan promotes the expansion of quality apprenticeship programming at the secondary and postsecondary levels.

Strategy 4: Expand Service Integration

As stated in Section III.b.2, the IWIB approved a collaborative policy development process to ensure a broad range of stakeholder engagement that yields cost-effective and efficient guidance to the field. The IWIB Service Integration Policy Workgroup will use this process to develop policy recommendations to the IWIB for implementing integrated and enhanced career services and case management. In 2019, the State Core Partners developed and implemented a statewide service integration self-assessment project in all LWIAs. These self-assessments are shaping local action plans for improvement supported by the WIOA regional and local plans and One-Stop MOUs.

Activity 4.1: Provide Coordinated and Enhanced Career Services

The state is working to support the delivery of enhanced career services to participants across partner programs. Employment Security is responsible for the Illinois Career Information System, a web-based tool that incorporates Illinois-specific actionable data regarding in-demand occupations and wages, that allows students and job seekers to make informed decisions about their career pathways. These services will result in individualized plans addressing how to reach career goals based on career and skill assessments and identified barriers requiring support services. Agency partners will also include the assessment of digital literacy as a basic skill and provide services to participants in gaining these skills through career services and through additional services in career pathway bridge programs. Agency partners will also provide career services guides, tools and professional development to core program staff in providing these career services. This will be supported by the Interagency Data Team to provide improved access to labor market information for career guidance highlighting in-demand industries and occupations and education, training and credentialing options for achieving career and education goals in participant plans (See Activity 5.2).

Activity 4.2: Provide Coordinated and Enhanced Case Management Services

The IWIB Service Integration Policy Workgroup, with the assistance of the Interagency Technical Assistance Team, coordinates and supports the delivery of enhanced case management services to participants across the core programs and with other partners. This effort will lead to the development of policy and practices that support enhanced case management through assessment and career planning. These efforts will inform the Workforce Academy described below in Activity 4.3 to develop training in the use of case management data from aligned and integrated case management systems used by core programs and with other partners, including related human resources and supportive service programs (also see Activity 6.3). Illinois' workforce and education partners are committed to this strategy as illustrated by the following initiatives.

- The WIOA partners will continue collaborating on improved service integration, working with one-stop required partners to develop standards for integrated case management services and training for local staff to meet and exceed the established service standards. This will

include improved and expanded training on best practices and linking participant outcomes data to the staff assigned to each customer.

- The Illinois Community College Board will implement strategies for Local Title II providers to offer professional development on assessment for case managers. ICCB will also continue to work on alignment of the Adult Education Area Planning Councils with the LWIAs to foster better case management and customer services for individuals with multiple barriers to employment.
- Title II Adult Education will continue to strategize with core and required partners, specifically TANF and Title I, to maximize efforts to provide coordinated services to mutual clients such as those underserved populations. This may include but is not limited to assessment of participants.

Activity 4.3: Promote Continuous Improvement and Ongoing Professional Development

State agency partners will promote continuous improvement in career services and case management services through state and regional initiatives that promote leading business practices, working with the IWIB as part of its expanded role (WIOA 101(d)(3)(vii)). The IWIB and the Interagency Professional Development Planning Team are leading an effort to create a Workforce Academy. LWIB and local input of front-line and supervisory workforce personnel will be critical in the development of the Academy. The Academy will build a common understanding of Illinois' vision and support the move to an integrated delivery system building the capacity of staff through cross-training and other professional development opportunities. This capacity building and technical assistance plan is a key objective of the IWIB's Strategic Plan and will support the assurance that all partner agencies and front-line staff are adequately prepared to understand and develop an effective plan to address the customer's needs.

In addition, front-line staff will be afforded opportunities to participate in ongoing professional development through topic-specific policy academies, as well as national professional development and credentialing programs, such as the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP). Furthermore, the IWIB and the interagency Professional Development Planning Team will leverage the expertise of the ICCB Adult Education and Career Technical Education programs and support available through several Illinois public community colleges and universities to provide professional development to agency partners in the appropriate administration of educational assessment of basic skill deficiencies. To the extent possible, training and information on promising practices and lessons learned will be delivered through technological solutions to maximize access and cost-effectiveness.

The WIOA Professional Development Committee is charged with coordinating regional and statewide professional development for the WIOA System as it relates to WIOA implementation, service integration and policy. The team is made up of WIOA partners at both the state and local levels. The WIOA Professional Development Team also plans the annual WIOA Summit, held in the spring of each year.

Illinois has utilized technology to produce webinars (*WIOA Wednesday Webinars*) that provide a platform for all program partners to discuss WIOA topics and build a "library" of information that

outlines the required and optional partner's programs. The webinars provide a forum to educate attendees about all programs, activities and resources, ask questions and offer suggestions towards improving collaboration efforts. Continuous improvement and professional development will also expand via regional roundtables and statewide summits that provide opportunities for peer-to-peer information exchange on best practices and lessons learned, establishing and strengthening cross-program relationships, and front-line feedback to state program leaders. These events will continue to include business representatives on the state and local workforce boards to understand the perspectives from their levels of the system.

Professional development, while being planned through the aforementioned Professional Development Team, will be working in conjunction with the IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee to identify best practices that can be replicated across the State, as well as topics and areas of need as identified by evaluations and other assessments. This has already been seen through the reviews of service integration self-assessment submissions related to the guidance and requirements found in WIOA Policy 1.13 Service Integration. Where necessary, and in support of the professional development planning, further policy and guidance will be developed when effective practices are identified to incorporate across the State.

Activity 4.4: Promote the Incorporation of Required Partner Services

The core partners continue to explore opportunities to incorporate the services of the Comprehensive One-Stop Center partners into case management and career services. Illinois has made progress through the Interagency Technical Assistance Team and Service Integration Team to identify the business services, career services, training services and supportive services of the state's workforce, education and economic development partners. Through the implementation of best practices from programs, such as the Disability Employment Initiative and the Bridge and Integrated Education and Training program, the state will develop policies through the IWIB policy process to ensure that there is a customer-centered coordination of services that considers the additional needs of the targeted populations as identified in this plan. Starting with the 2020-24 WIOA Regional and Local Plans, all plans must indicate a commitment to implement local service integration action plans. Further, the Governor's Guidelines for one-stop MOUs require a specific description of how these efforts are being implemented in the one-stops.

Strategy 5: Promote Improved Data-Driven Decision Making

The Interagency Data Team will design, develop and use the statewide public-private data infrastructure (Strategy 6) to provide both employers and job seekers with tools to promote and access job openings; review changing labor market trends and opportunities; identify funding opportunities and fund education, training and support services. This will require partners to ensure that privacy and security issues are addressed.

Activity 5.1: Improve Employer Tools for Communicating and Accessing Information

The IWIB and State partners will collectively develop new tools for employers to communicate their forecasted demand for workers and review and provide input into industry and occupational projections developed through Employment Security. These include new tools for employers working together in leading regional partnerships to continuously communicate short-term forecasts of job

openings and competency and credentialing requirements for these jobs. This will build on tools and best practices from employer-led national and state initiatives, including the United States Chamber of Commerce Talent Pipeline Management Initiative and the Vermilion Advantage Talent Pipeline Initiative. Illinois will also improve employer capacity to easily communicate career opportunities and current job openings to regional partnerships and their broader labor market in Illinois. This will be accomplished through employer tools that can be easily integrated with their current human resource information systems and their own websites that provide information on careers and job openings. Commerce and other regional and local partners will work with businesses to improve public/private communication of workforce needs, including demand competencies and the location, timing, quantity of specific demands and talent flow analysis. A Business HUB landing page, with links to key information companies identified as value-added is available on Illinois workNet and continues to be refined based on employer feedback.

Activity 5.2: Improve Access to Career and Education Guidance Tools and Information

The IWIB has increased their role in aligning with education. This includes significantly increased coordination between workforce and secondary and postsecondary education to promote career awareness, career exploration and planning, as well as, student exposure to in-demand careers. Board members have welcomed inclusion in reviews and requests to provide feedback on recommendations during the development of education legislation, such as the recent Perkins V Reauthorization and subsequent Perkins V State Plan development. This collaboration will continue to both educate board members on all system-related programs, but also on how each has elements of overlap and relationship to the others.

The ICCB Title II: Adult Education and Literacy -- in partnership with core partner programs, representatives of Illinois businesses, local chambers of commerce; secondary, postsecondary and adult educators and professionals and other important stakeholders -- developed an Essential Skills Framework designed to address needed employability and what were called soft-skills identified by employers. The Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework (EES) is designed to define and clarify essential employability skills and provide a standard for the state. Essential employability skills are those general skills that are required to be successful in all sectors of the labor market and are separate from the technical skills attained in career pathways or academic skills, such as math and reading. Various community colleges are using the EES Framework in the classroom and with employers.

The IWIB Service Integration Policy Workgroup and the Interagency Technical Assistance Team will also utilize existing tools and develop new and improved tools and information to support enhanced career services provided by the core programs, other partners and also the secondary and postsecondary education partners. The team will expand the Illinois Career Information System tools to avoid duplication and to provide the ability to use a flexible and robust system (Strategy 4). The team continues to explore ongoing training and support to front-line career services and case management staff to improve access and use of these tools and resources as part of the Workforce Academy.

Activity 5.3: Improve Access and Integration of Eligible Training Provider Lists

To improve the access and use of the WIOA Eligible Training Provider Lists (ETPL) by employers and job seekers, the state is moving forward with the development of a statewide technological platform branded as ProPath Illinois, which will integrate existing educational and workforce training provider and program data and allow for the ability of agile enhancements to educational and workforce training data. Built on the next generation of Illinois workNet cloud technology, ProPath Illinois builds on the existing state Educational PW20 system, the IL Longitudinal Data System (ILDS), the Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator (CDDA), the IL Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI), and the IL Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) systems, and partners to advance the state forward into the next generation of transparency and accessibility of educational and workforce training information. In addition to creating an interoperable training provider and program data directory, ProPath Illinois will establish a statewide Illinois-Administrative Data Research Facility (I-ADRF) that has the ability to facilitate and accelerate data sharing, exploration, and research into the next generation. The I-ADRF is part of a national data research piloting initiative, the Administrative Data research Facility (ADRF), which enables secure access to analytical tools, data storage and discovery services, and general computing resources for users to revolutionize evidence-based policymaking and comply with the Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act of 2016.

Activity 5.4: Improve Access and Utilization of Labor Market and Workforce System Information

Labor market and career information are currently provided on the Employment Security website through a variety of web-based tools included in the Illinois Virtual Labor Market Information (VLMI) System supported by Geographic Solutions and the Illinois Career Information System, which incorporates Illinois-specific labor market information (LMI). Through cooperation with the core partners, additional enhancements will improve the current platform, and changes will be made through any new technology platform utilized by the state. The Illinois Community College Board will work with Adult Education providers to utilize LMI in making decisions about integrated training and bridge programs.

Strategy 6: Advance Public-Private Data Infrastructure

The Interagency Data Team, in cooperation with the Interagency Technical Assistance Team, will expand and improve the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the five strategies described above. This requires the integration of LMI with state education and workforce longitudinal data systems, as well as program and case management systems.

Activity 6.1: Enhance the State Labor Market Information System

The core partners, including the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security), continue to work to enhance the Labor Market Information (LMI) system to support the WIOA strategies. Traditional LMI produced by Employment Security is readily available on the Employment Security website, the Virtual Labor Market Information (VLMI) system, (a Geographic Solutions web tool which houses the Workforce Information Database per the requirements of the Workforce Information Grant), and limited LMI through the Illinois Career Information System (wages and projections). Traditional LMI includes occupational wage information, current economic conditions by industry and geography, as well as short term and long-term Industry and Occupational

Employment Projections by local area. Also included are the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (labor force data) and Current Employment Statistics (local area jobs data by industry). Near real-time LMI includes information on The Conference Board's Help Wanted Online Job Ads postings by Economic Development Region and can be customized upon request. Other real-time LMI utilizes information from the state's Unemployment Insurance and Employment Service programs. Commerce, in partnership with Employment Security, continues development of the Illinois Employment Business System (IEBS), which is a new cloud-based agile software platform. The ultimate goal of IEBS is to provide quality workforce information and layoff tracking data from multiple reliable sources that is easy to access, easy to understand, easy to retain and extract in order to make data-driven decisions that facilitate state efforts for layoff aversion and promote economic and workforce advancement in Illinois. Built-in responsive design, IEBS will empower users to have the business intelligence they need via smartphone, tablet or laptop to quickly search the economic landscape of Illinois utilizing real-time D&B global business data, IL Dept. of Employment Security LMI data, and State and local workforce layoff tracking data. Providing government workforce and economic advocates with critical transparent business intelligence via on-the-fly dashboards, analytic tools, and industry cluster SWOT information will facilitate informed strategic decision making and result in the ability for state leadership to formulate evidence-based policy making. In addition, the Interagency Data Team reviewed national best practices to improve data analysis and presentation used in this plan and also for data packets provided to WIOA regional planning teams to make LMI more accessible to a wider audience of stakeholders.



Activity 6.2: Expand and Improve the State Longitudinal Data System

Illinois will continue to expand and improve the state education and workforce longitudinal data system to support the six strategies. This will include initiatives to use state longitudinal data to support regional sector partnerships based on lessons learned from initiatives, such as the Vermilion Advantage pilot project. It will also continue to build the capacity to link to state licensing, industry and professional certification data. This will build on the pilot projects and will include:

- Expanding labor market information by including improved measures of workforce outcomes (job attachment and full quarter earnings) that can be used to benchmark the outcomes for education and training graduates to other Illinois workers.
- Developing longitudinal worker profiles from improved measures for workforce outcomes.
- Developing and implementing a mapping of labor entrants and worker flows across jobs and over time to understand local labor supply and employer demand dynamics.

The Illinois Community College Board will continue its efforts with other State level core and required partners, specifically Employment Security and Commerce, to develop a system that will align and integrate labor market information with state educational and workforce longitudinal data leading to better-integrated customer services for both the job-seeker and the employer.

Illinois was awarded a Workforce Data Quality Initiative Round VII grant to the Department of Commerce with which it will be applying to the ProPath Illinois initiative to re-engineer technological platform for training program and training provider data and transparency. Utilizing the Illinois workNet technology platform the training data will be augmented and standardized leveraging the schematics, profiles and established best practices set forth from the global Credential Engine initiative. In addition to the training provider platform, the WDQI project will expand previous work done on enhanced outcomes measurement. The I-ADRF is the Illinois component of a broader ADRF ecosystem, administered by New York University (NYU), containing microdata from several Midwestern states. It leverages existing State data infrastructure to provide career outcome information to potential training participants and support the scaling of successful programs. Through Pro Path Illinois, additional State data on education and workforce training programs and participants will be added to I-ADRF, new I-ADRF interagency projects will be supported, and new stakeholder products on workforce outcomes will be generated. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago will partner with State agencies to develop evaluation frameworks and dashboards that enhance performance information for dissemination. These dashboards will address WIOA performance accountability requirements and provide learning pathways and career outcomes data for incorporation into various outreach methods.

Activity 6.3: Improve the Integration of Program and Case Management Information Systems

The Illinois Data Team will work with core partners and the Illinois Chief Information Officer, as well as the Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT), to improve the integration of program and case management systems as applicable to improve service delivery. This team also will work to improve the integration with state longitudinal data systems to support evaluation and continuous improvement.

Additionally, initial efforts to improve integration of program design and delivery have been occurring through statewide grants, such as the Youth Career Pathways Initiative Grant and previous projects such as EPIC and the Disability Employment Initiative. These initiatives used joint assessment, career planning, referral, communication and scheduling processes through technology that aligned and coordinated case management. As other new initiatives are developed, they will use the same design process.

B. Alignment with Activities outside the Plan

The core program activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by the required partners and optional partners by engaging representatives from all programs at both the state and local levels, to participate in ongoing work groups, working subgroups, regional meetings and weekly webinars, all in an effort to establish and maintain consistent, and clear communication. Putting into place joint policies will not only support the communication strategy but will also ensure coordination of services and avoid duplication.

As described in the response under Section III.a.1., the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) in partnership with state agencies and stakeholders, provides strategic leadership to ensure the alignment of the workforce development system with employment, training, education, human services and other programs. This alignment will result in increased partnership opportunities with career and technical education, work-based learning, including Registered Apprenticeships, and leveraging funds of various programs for the necessary supports customers need. IWIB Policy workgroups provide policy recommendations that promote integration of the workforce system with education and other partners. The composition of these workgroups includes local board members, local workforce staff, education, community-based organizations and other partners. These stakeholders will work to revise current IWIB policy, such as One-Stop Certification, Service Integration and ETPL as part of continuous improvement, as well as develop new policies that will strengthen the system. The Interagency Technical Assistance Team provides operational leadership and alignment across these programs as well. This team has built on and has integrated current state and regional planning initiatives and resources of the state agency partners that administer the required Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs.

The IWIB's Policy Workgroups will work with key stakeholders to expand the strategies outlined in Section III.a.2.A, as well as the key initiatives listed below to drive the coordination of program activity, improve the level of service to business and job seekers, increase efficiencies and eliminate duplication. The Interagency Technical Assistance Team will provide the operational support to ensure MOUs, Regional/Local Plans and budgets/infrastructure costs as described within the Governor's Guidelines align with statewide system policy and practice.

Regional planning meetings have been a key strategy for connecting the workforce system to economic development and will continue to be part of professional development and other efforts to strengthen relationships and increase business engagement. Previous regional planning meetings, which included partner program staff from each Economic Development Region (EDR) served as a way to understand each partner's program, review regional demographics and program data and learn to use a data-driven planning approach. These meetings served as the basis of Illinois' ten WIOA regional plans. The core program partners) are all actively engaged in these regional planning meetings as part of their leadership role in the development of guidelines and the coordinated review process of the regional/local plans, MOUs and budgets outlining the local infrastructure and shared costs.

Alignment with Employment and Training

The Illinois Department of Employment Security and Goodwill of Springfield officials are combining resources to assist Goodwill clients, many of which are veterans. Goodwill is seeking assistance in tracking outcomes that resulted from services they provided clients and a plan to address that need is taking shape. The local Goodwill service area covers from Quincy to Danville, as well as Springfield to Bloomington, and serve approximately three thousand individuals. Through use of the State's Labor Exchange System (Illinois Joblink), seekers will be enrolled as participants and offered applicable integrated WIOA partner services from all four core partner programs. Goodwill Springfield has obtained a Google grant in the amount of \$50,000. The Grant language requires Goodwill to report on retention rates (90-day post-employment) as a measure of outcomes. IDES tracks wages and retention rates and will provide that data once an MOU is in place. IDES will also

support Springfield Goodwill's pursuit of the Homeless Veteran's Reintegration Program (HVRP) grant. The HVRP assists homeless veterans in obtaining long-term employment. A participant receives job skills training, job search assistance, pre-employment coaching, job placement, vocational counseling, case management and referrals to available resources. Peoria Goodwill, an HVRP grantee, already partners with IDHS to serve this population. Knowledge gained from this partnership and the existing Peoria Goodwill MOU, which details multi-partnered service delivery, will be utilized to inform the process. Grants from the US Department of Labor supporting this program total more than twenty-five million dollars.

The Economic Information and Analysis (EI&A) Division of Employment Security will continue to work closely with the workforce, education and economic development partner's Data Team to provide labor market information to inform employment and training decisions. Illinois will implement the best practices from pilot projects, such as the United States Chamber of Commerce Talent Pipeline Management with Vermilion Advantage to measure talent pipelines in local areas and determine which of the sector partnerships and career pathways are more effective in their local areas. Illinois will also measure workforce outcomes using Illinois' Longitudinal Data System (ILDS). The ILDS will also be an important mechanism for aligning plan activities with a number of partner activities outside of the plan. Using lessons learned from the WIOA planning process Illinois intends to develop an ILDS agency plan regarding occupational supply/demand data. While Illinois has often produced occupational supply and demand data in conjunction with IWIB workforce development task forces and committees, we recognize the opportunity to develop a sustainable, repeatable occupational supply and demand reporting process for all regions and public, secondary and post-secondary institutions in Illinois.

The IWIB and program partners will continue to work on establishing outcome performance measures that allow partners to see the benefits of certificate and post-secondary degree programs on job stability, as well as earnings, which can be compared to other Illinois workers by comparing the reference group to all Illinois workers by using the Longitudinal Employment Dynamics program (United States Census). Employment Security's EI&A Division is unique in the nation in having established enhanced measures of workforce outcomes that utilize career earnings from the UI Wage Records apart from secondary earnings when employees have wages coming from more than one job. This provides a more accurate reflection of the specific benefits of job training programs.

In 2017, the Illinois Task Force on Employment and Economic Opportunity for Persons with Disabilities (EEOPD) submitted a plan to the Governor and the State Legislature that recommended actionable steps to address barriers to competitive employment and economic opportunity for persons with disabilities. The EEOPD was given the responsibility for promoting "Employment First" principles in the state with the objective of ensuring that integrated, competitive employment at or above minimum wage is considered the first option for people with disabilities. Since 2019, EEOPD has been given additional responsibilities through state laws focusing on employment for people with disabilities. This includes reporting on implementation of a training program for state employees with disabilities (PA 100-0533), assisting in development of a customized employment system (PA 101-0368) and assuming the responsibilities of the Interagency Coordinating Council for transition of youth with disabilities (PA 100-0866).

One recommendation is to align the mandated requirements under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) with Employment First principles. Implementation of this strategy will occur by linking the EEOPD with the IWIB to embed strategies for creating inclusiveness in the workforce system and the placement of people with disabilities into competitive employment settings across the state. This linkage not only emphasizes the priority of persons with disabilities within WIOA, but addresses an issue highlighted within the EEOPD plan by aligning plans and breaking down silos across programs. Illinois Title I and Title IV core partners are represented on the Task Force along with representatives of employers, educators, disability advocates and service provider agencies. The plan is included in Attachment K (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20AA%20--%20Employment%20and%20Economic%20Opportunity%20for%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities%20Recommndations%20Report.pdf>).

The state continues to implement WIOA in conjunction with the ApprenticeshipUSA State Accelerator Grants. This initiative will help Illinois build upon existing strategies to expand and diversify Registered Apprenticeship opportunities. These strategies will include convening key industry representatives, state agency leaders and other stakeholders to form strategic partnerships and emphasize work-based learning (including apprenticeship) as a workforce solution in both traditional and non-traditional industries including IT, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity, business services and transportation.

Alignment with Education

Fundamental to the regional planning process is the promotion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships that reinforce and customize career pathways best practices. As a part of this strategy, Illinois will leverage the WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs), Trade and Statewide Activities funds to further develop work-based learning opportunities across the education and workforce system. In administering the Title IB statewide activities, Commerce is working with local boards to ensure that the new WIOA innovation initiatives are 1) data-driven by the needs of business and labor market information 2) regionally based and 3) inclusive of staff of the core, required and optional one-stop program partners. The state will make further investment in innovation and technical assistance projects based on the needs identified through this review process. An example of this is WIOA training that was funded by a Statewide Activities grant and coordinated by the Illinois Workforce Partnership. The project provided business outreach and case management training that was made available to all of the core partners.

The state's educational partners (including Title II Adult Education and Postsecondary Perkins/Career and Technical Education) are part of the team that will coordinate these efforts at the state, regional and local levels. These identified practices will come from other efforts currently occurring in the state, such as those mentioned in 3.1 above, as well as the implementation of select recommendations made by relevant groups and plans that have a specific focus on career pathways (e.g. ICCB Workforce and Adult Education Strategic Plans and the Community College Presidents Council.) Significantly, the State's Perkins V Plan, as developed by ISBE, ICCB, and a broad range of stakeholders, calls for increased alignment with employer needs, priorities of the State Workforce Board, and goals and initiatives of the WIOA Unified Plan. It is anticipated that broader state policy beyond WIOA for the workforce and education systems will be impacted by these approaches:

- The coordination of the Career Pathway Definition among education and core and required partners;
- Illinois Essential Skill framework led by Adult Education in partnership with core and required partners;
- Strategic Plans developed by the ICCB in partnership with core and required partners;
- Statewide Workforce Summit held that included all partners;
- Transitions Summit provided by ICCB Adult Education and Career Technical Education for development of Bridge and Integrated Education and Training Programs;
- The ICCB will develop strategies for community colleges to use to strengthen their CTE Business Advisory Councils to be more proactive and employer-led, thereby ensuring that community colleges are aligning training to key industry sectors in each of the ten Economic Development Regions; and
- The ICCB will utilize the DOL Scaling Apprenticeships through Sector-Based Strategies grant to promote and expand apprenticeships across the state in the information technology sector leading to models that can be utilized in many sectors.

Alignment with Human Services and Other Programs

The release of the IWIB Service Integration Policy provides the framework that will strengthen the alignment with human services and other programs. Using the Service Integration Self-Assessment Process, Illinois will continue building in professional development opportunities that will improve the outcomes of the one-stop system through processes such as coordinated intake, assessment, referral, and career planning. As mentioned in the professional development section Activity 4.3, Illinois will rely heavily on various forms of training and technical assistance to achieve this outcome.

Additionally, Governor Pritzker's EO 3 has a strong emphasis on alignment and called for strategies that focus on leveraging education and workforce resources to serve disenfranchised populations in communities throughout Illinois. To that end, Illinois will expand or develop strategies in response to the following Action Areas under the Executive Order Report:

- Action Area 2: Prepare Illinois workers for a career, not just their next job Strategies/Activities.
- Action Area 3: Integrate Workforce Services for Job Seekers

These two action areas address implementing approaches, such as (also described elsewhere in this plan):

- Connecting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients with career preparation and training. Participants will receive personal career development and team counseling to develop customized accelerated training plans that include job skills training and work-based learning opportunities with local employers that lead to credentials in high-demand fields and employment. The goal is to help participants get good career pathway

jobs, increase earnings and reduce reliance on public assistance. This is particularly critical given Illinois no longer has the waiver from time-limited benefits for this population.

- Expanding models to increase opportunities to provide career training and apprenticeship opportunities to inmates re-entering the workforce.
- Scale the use of Integrated Education and Training models to help adults get their GED and work on other basic skills while getting credentials to in-demand occupations.

The Governor's Rural Affairs Council (GRAC) addresses issues that have particular impact on the rural portions of Illinois. The GRAC will continue to focus on the lack of adequate bandwidth in rural areas and the lack of mobility. This deficit impacts the ability to deliver diverse educational opportunities and can be a deterrent to companies relocating and remaining in rural Illinois. The GRAC is aligned with major elements of the EO3 and with the Unified State Plan by focusing on three areas this fiscal year:

- Education and Workforce Development
- Health and Healthcare
- Economic Development and Infrastructure

C. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals

A key component in coordinating activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality customer-centered services, is to increase the integration of services made available to all job seekers on a local and regional level. The integration of services provided by all core and required program partners will also consider the future educational and employment needs of the job seekers served throughout Illinois. Expanding collaboration efforts around methods to improve local service delivery by improving our assessment of the opportunities and needs of individuals -- along with employer engagement -- will be key in our efforts to administer high quality, customer-centered services. The IWIB's Service Integration Policy Work Group developed a framework to address these critical issues. This framework includes a process for local area one-stop partners to self-assess the current state of service integration and create an action plan to address locally selected priorities for improvement.

Regional Planning Assessment and Analysis

Illinois has developed and promoted an integrated Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) strategic planning process across education, workforce and economic development, which will provide comprehensive, high-quality customer-centered services. The regional planning process included an examination of target population data provided by the state Data Team and other relevant local studies. Regional teams examined supply-side data and considered ways to leverage partners' expertise, programs and resources to connect available talent pools to career opportunities in targeted industries. The planning process included analysis of how the partners in each region will address the specific needs of the targeted populations and an asset mapping process to inventory the career, education, training and supportive services that are available in each region.

Governor's Guidelines

The State of Illinois will continue to use the IWIB Policy Workgroup process to develop and recommend policy to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) regarding system-wide policy such as mentioned above (One-stop Certification, Service Integration, ETPL, etc.). The operational requirements found in the Governor's Guidelines are and will continue under the leadership of the Interagency Technical Assistance Team. Under the Governor's Guidelines, the Local Workforce Innovation Board (LWIB) must describe the services that will be provided to individuals and how the services will be coordinated between the required and optional partners.

The Governor's Guidelines were revised upon the issuance of the WIOA Final Rules and are revised annually, responding to federal guidance as necessary. An MOU approved by the Interagency Technical Assistance Team is one of the prerequisites for obtaining one-stop certification.

One-Stop Certification

The one-stop certification framework in place addresses 41 criteria in 19 areas that include center effectiveness, accessibility & infrastructure and continuous improvement. In 2018, the IWIB One-Stop Certification Policy Work Group reconvened to review the results of the certification process. Several potential refinements to the policy were identified, as were improvement opportunities and notable practices for Illinois' network of one-stop centers that will be incorporated into the policy. Additionally, this policy work group met after the service integration policy was issued to ensure that the goals and outcomes from that policy were incorporated into the one-stop certification application. The work group will continue to meet to frame recommendations to the IWIB for strengthening this policy and providing technical assistance as further information regarding the needs of the workforce system is gleaned and partners work toward advancing service integration at the state and local levels.

Labor Market Information

Labor market information and demand-driven data set the foundation for the WIOA career services in Illinois. Employment Security is responsible for labor market information (LMI) and the Illinois Career Information System, a web-based tool that incorporates Illinois-specific actionable data on in-demand occupations and wages that allow students and job seekers to make informed decisions about their career pathways. These services will result in individualized plans addressing how to reach career goals based on career and skill assessments and identified barriers requiring support services. Illinois will leverage the work of statewide, public-private partnerships to better coordinate investments, resources and planning for those programs with the goal of providing more opportunities for targeted individuals.

Workforce and education partners including Adult Education, Postsecondary Perkins/Career and Technical Education and Illinois State Board of Education will expand career development guides and technical assistance materials to promote leading career pathway models and best practices that can be implemented through regional sector partnerships and other regional sector initiatives. These technical assistance materials (along with associated professional development) will address how to improve career services and expand customer access to accelerated and integrated work-based and classroom training, align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and support services for targeted populations facing barriers to employment. They will also address

how to fully mainstream targeted populations into sector-based career pathway initiatives in order to achieve outcomes similar to those of other populations.

Coordinated Case Management and Supportive Services

A key strategy outlined in Section III.a.2.A, is the development policies for integrated and enhanced career services and case management. Illinois will utilize the regional planning process and updated Governor's Guidelines to drive customer-centered workforce centers that align the available career, education, training and supportive services. Illinois is working to develop case management teams to coordinate and support the delivery of enhanced case management services to participants across the required and optional program partners. As stated in Section III.a.2.A, Activity 4.3, cross-agency training and professional development will be developed through the Workforce Academy to ensure that needs are clearly understood by all partners, both core and required. This includes leveraging the resources of partners, such as ICCB Adult Education to provide professional development to agency partners in the appropriate administration of educational assessment of basic skill deficiencies. Finally, as mentioned earlier, training will be delivered through technological solutions in order to maximize access and cost-effectiveness.

In an effort to move forward with providing customer-centered services the state will expand on customer workflow studies like the Customer Centered Design Challenge. The Customer Centered Design (CCD) Community is a community designed to enable workforce development practitioners who are interested in studying, and/or practicing Human Centered Design, to share information, learn from each other and foster new knowledge.

The intent of the Customer Centered Design Challenge course is to task all WIOA program partners to rethink how services are administered, with the customer at the center as opposed to laws and regulations. A successful application of this concept was taken on by a dedicated group of workforce providers that included IDOC, Workforce Development Board (WDB), Rock Island Tri-County Consortium (RITCC), Lake Land College, Black Hawk College, University of Illinois Extension, Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), Illinois Department of Human Services, The Illinois Migrant Council and Project NOW, Inc.

A coordinated Case Management and Supportive Services strategy has been implemented through Life Skills Re-Entry Centers and Local Workforce Areas State-wide Coordination and Innovation Project for Returning Citizens (IPRC). Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center was the first Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) location where a customer-centered workforce center-aligned the available career, education, training and supportive services. The business-driven local workforce development board created an American Job Center (Specialized One-Stop Career Center) inside Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center staffed by workforce professionals. Core, required and optional partner organizations are part of IPRC, using the American Job Center model.

Customers being served are (1) businesses/employers, (2) State of Illinois / IDOC, and (3) incarcerated offenders / returning citizens. Workforce professionals meet routinely with all three types of customers to ensure that focus and programs are customer-driven. Outreach has been improved using digital newsletters and videos produced by incarcerated offenders. Resources are under development and already implemented, including a specialized web portal for workforce

practitioners, as well as returning citizens, within Illinois workNet (IwN). The IwN on-line avenue continues to be collaboratively developed by the Illinois Department of Commerce, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, IDOC, WDB, RITCC, and IDES. During this year, WDB and RITCC have extended IPRC implementation to Murphysboro Life Skills Re-Entry Center and Logan Correctional Center.

Incorporation of Required Partner Services to Targeted Populations

Illinois will highlight and encourage adoption of the best practices that are identified in statewide innovation projects that serve targeted populations throughout the state. This includes joint projects between the agencies responsible for administering the required WIOA programs.

Aligning equity goals across education and workforce. Commerce, ICCB, and ISBE will convene an equity committee to establish equity goals through the creation of tools that will disaggregate data by race, gender, and target populations to reveal disparities in policies and programs. Policies will be updated and/or developed to reduce equity gaps. This will also serve as a foundational policy for serving priority populations under WIOA Title I.

Aligning and implementing the best practices for projects that address employment to people with disabilities. Commerce, ICCB and Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) have worked with regional and local partners to increase the participation of individuals with disabilities (aged 18 and above) in integrated career pathway and academic programs through community colleges and non-profit organizations in cooperation with American Job Centers, Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIB), employment networks and other regional partners.

Aligning and developing bridge programs for low-literacy and low-skilled adults to sequentially bridge the gap between the initial skills of individuals and what they need to enter and succeed in post-secondary education and career path employment. The state's bridge programs prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in post-secondary education and training leading to career path employment in-demand occupations. The state agency partners will focus on expanding access and success in sector-based bridge programs that provide opportunities for low-skilled and low-literate youth and adults. The state will support new initiatives that promote sector-based pre-bridge, bridge programs and integrated education and training models that expand access and success of low-skilled youth and adults in career pathways. These programs are designed to introduce individuals to career pathway programs of interest.

The state recognizes the use of bridge programs as a foundation for career pathway systems and also as a foundation for employment opportunities and other training. ICCB will work closely with core and required partners under WIOA to re-examine the use of bridge programs for those individuals who lack basic skills as a way of connecting with Title I and Title III for training opportunities, and with Title IV to ensure those who are basic skills deficient and have learning differences have access to tools needed to be successful.

Aligning and coordinating WIOA Title I services with efforts that currently address justice-involved youth. Illinois is exploring a range of career pathway models for justice-involved youth seen nationally and statewide as best practices and examining ways to braid and blend funding for maximum impact. Where possible, these models will be folded into existing juvenile justice efforts

for seamless service alignment to add the expertise of WIOA service providers to strengthen employment and training models.

Aligning and coordinating critical programs and services for veterans. Employment Security provides veterans' employment representatives, who are fellow veterans and specialists in providing employment services. Illinois veterans will be served through the WIOA priority of service, as well as targeted initiatives administered by the workforce and education partners and the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs. As the WIOA definition of case management describes, it takes a community of resources to assist Veterans to overcome/mitigate the identified barriers to employment and get them back into the workforce.

Aligning and coordinating WIOA Title I with Title II Adult Education services to ensure immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners have access to services, such as workforce readiness, bridge programs, and Integrated Education and Training through the Illinois workNet American Job Centers. As an example, in areas with high populations of English language learners, the resource room in a one-stop will offer online classes for students learning English.

D. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers

Employer engagement strategies and best practices are a hallmark of an efficient and effective workforce system. Recognizing this and to guide a system that is responsive to current and future needs of businesses, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) created a new Employer Engagement Committee. Originating during discussions of the IWIB Leadership Team, three key objectives were identified that should lead the initial focus of the committee:

- Identify Industry Sector Partnerships engaged in the workforce needs of the State of Illinois.
- Convene employers and WIOA service providers to better align business needs with training, services and program design.
- Identify target industries to focus on bringing together small and large employers with the Illinois workforce development system to discuss what is needed to streamline existing pathways and create new opportunities.

This committee will be employer-led, bringing together representatives of the state and local workforce boards and other employers and employer organizations, as well as representatives of Illinois' WIOA system to identify best practices, lessons learned, marketing strategies and priority challenges, and to create proactive measures to strengthen current engagement practices.

Under the strategic direction of the IWIB, Illinois has embedded sector strategies into workforce development programs across Illinois supporting businesses, employees and job seekers. These approaches enable the workforce system to customize solutions for employers in the industries that are most vital to our economy. Through customized training solutions, employed, unemployed and underemployed workers are better able to obtain the skills they need and that businesses require. Illinois will maintain this sector focus in the upcoming program years through activities that continue the development of a sector-based approach in Illinois.

Integrated Business Services Framework

Illinois received formal technical assistance from the United States Department of Labor's (DOL) Chicago Regional Office in 2016 to assist with business service integration through an analysis of how business services are currently structured, designed and delivered across the four core partners in Illinois. This information supports the agencies' understanding of each other's work and identifies opportunities to streamline activities and align resources. The project report also identified key components of effective integrated business services, as well as promising practices or models related to those elements to support possible replication, in part or whole in Illinois. Those resources laid the groundwork for the development of Illinois' Integrated Business Services Framework that was approved by the IWIB in December 2017 (Attachment V) (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20V%20-%20State%20of%20Illinois%20Framework%20for%20Integrated%20Business%20Services%2020.pdf>).

The report noted that all the core partners' business services representatives -- or their local partners -- directly engage with business, but the degree of coordination for that engagement varies across the state.

- WIOA Title I business services are mainly provided through Local Workforce Innovation Area (LWIA) staff whose responsibilities vary, but typically include outreach to businesses, managing on-the-job training contracts and incumbent worker grants to companies, marketing (often via website and social media), and providing information to companies regarding the offerings available through the workforce system. These services are provided in coordination with the state and local economic development professionals. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) Office of Employment and Training (OET) Program and Planning staff frequently meet with businesses and associations for insight into how to improve local service delivery. The majority of OET staff, however, who engage directly with business are working with the Rapid Response program to support businesses undergoing layoffs by coordinating services to the affected workers. Their work entails building relationships and working with businesses to mitigate the impact of the layoffs and also determine if workforce training services could forestall future layoffs.
- The Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) employs state agency staff to engage in business outreach in local workforce areas in need of those services. Employment Security staff are co-located in all local workforce one-stop centers. Employment Security Business Services Managers coordinate service delivery with businesses to include HR solutions, labor market analytics, reviews for applicable workforce program applications and job matching services. IDES' Veterans' Employment Representatives work specifically with businesses on behalf of veterans, and Disabled Veterans' Employment Representatives are available to work with veterans with disabilities.
- The Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) employs state agency staff to engage in business services in many of the local areas across the state. In 2019, DRS created the Planning and Business Development Unit (PBDU) to coordinate business engagement activities for the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program. This unit employs Business Services Consultants (BSC) and Employment Resource Specialists (ERS) who are charged with engaging businesses for the purpose of understanding

their current and future needs and matching those with VR customers. They also work to foster an ongoing relationship with business customers to ensure consistent support and services. PBDU staff provide a variety of services to business to support successful employment of people with disabilities. Services span a broad spectrum, from consulting and technical assistance to businesses to enhance their disability awareness to financial support for training and job accommodations. DRS staff also partner with local business services teams to coordinate communication with businesses in each area.

- In most cases, Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Adult Education does not provide services directly to businesses, as those services are provided by local staff in community colleges and other providers. Those services are coordinated through Business and Industry Centers/Corporate Training Centers and Career and Technical Education to ensure a connection to high demand occupations. Staff employed through community colleges' Corporate Training Centers also provide a variety of consulting and coaching, but also develop customized training for specific businesses. CTE Divisions within the community colleges include business as a part of their advisory committees.

The State Framework for Integrated Business Services was developed by a workgroup made up of private sector members of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board, representatives from the Illinois Workforce Partnership (IWP) and representatives from Illinois' core WIOA partners (Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity, Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Department of Human Services, Illinois Community College Board). This Integrated Business Services Workgroup continues to address challenges and opportunities for improvements. The framework is intended to support talent pipeline strategies designed to assist partners in working together to address the workforce needs of business in a region. At the core of these models are industry sector partnerships led by businesses and focused on crucial industry clusters. Sector partners work collaboratively to listen to and understand the workforce needs of business and to develop customized solutions that respond to those needs. Eight foundational elements for the framework have been identified and recommended by the workgroup. The integrated provision of business services should be:

- **Sector-based** – The provision of business services should align around regionally identified industry sectors significant to the regional economy.
- **Transformational** – Engagement of businesses should provide a platform for regular and ongoing dialogue, providing a transformation of the relationships between business and workforce partners.
- **Regional** – Service delivery should be regional in nature and should align with the Governor's ten economic development regions, as well as multi-region and multi-state approaches when those are indicated by the needs of the sector partnership.
- **Coordinated** – The framework should describe coordinated approaches and strategies used by *all* partners to meet business needs.
- **United** – Building upon efforts already underway, efforts should continue to co-locate partners to ensure maximum coordination.

- **Flexible** – The framework should provide enough guidance to be helpful but should also allow flexibility for regional innovation and customization.
- **Aligned** – Existing policies/procedures should be reviewed and revised to ensure alignment and progress toward service integration.
- **Allowable** – Partners’ federal mandates to provide specific, related services must still be met when developing the state framework.

The workgroup identified five components that are necessary for the integrated provision of business services in the state and its ten economic development regions:

- **Organizational structure** – At both the State and regional level, organizational structures will be developed that enable communication between partners to develop a single, reliable, agreed-upon strategy to support engagement and contact between employers and the workforce/economic development system. The form of these organizational structures will vary according to economic development region and sector. Leveraging existing relationships between and among businesses and public partners is recommended as the most reliable initial strategy for engagement with particular employers and sectors. The ten economic development regions will develop mechanisms that will connect business to the full range of partner services – regardless of source.
- **Management of business intelligence** – Given the need to share information across partners -- at the State level, but particularly at the regional/local level -- management of business intelligence is critical. Recognizing the challenges of creating a statewide cross-agency Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, the state’s initial strategy will focus on supporting creative approaches to meeting these regional/local level responsibilities. It is important for regional partners to understand the grassroots nature of business intelligence development. Perhaps the most important data development issue will always be the creation of methods to record and access partner knowledge regarding employer needs, to share that knowledge across the partner network and then to utilize that knowledge to jointly develop and implement proactive solutions to business and sector needs.
- **Solutions-based service offerings** – The service offerings provided to businesses must be focused on delivering timely solutions to expressed business needs. Each region should have its own standardized process for contacting employers in each targeted industry sector and have the capability of providing direct access to appropriate services or referral to all partners who can provide those services. Solutions-based service first requires a focus on listening to what business communicates that it needs, and then requires flexible, creative and timely responses to those needs - a process that builds a portfolio of customized solutions for businesses, without merely “dumping” pre-packaged programs and processes on them.
- **Emphasis on work-based learning and other business-focused services** – Closely tied to the solutions sought by businesses is the expanded use of work-based learning (Registered Apprenticeships, Youth Apprenticeships, Pre-Apprenticeships, Customized Training, On-the-Job Training, Incumbent Worker Training and others). This emphasis recognizes work-based learning as often the most effective mechanism for delivering Training and Education

solutions in an environment that is directly shaped to and for the needs of the employer – their own business.

- **Accountability and performance measurement** – The four framework elements discussed so far will bring significant changes in the focus, intent and utilization of business services. Along with those changes comes the need to develop appropriate measures of performance. This will enable the measurement (and dissemination) of the meaningful results of those business services activities and will also serve to establish feedback loops that will facilitate data-driven course corrections to the other four framework elements. In particular, these measures should be focused on the value of these services to businesses through measures, such as, reduced turnover, reduction in the time required to fill vacancies, enhanced employee retention, additional viable candidates applying for work and enhanced productivity.

Support Employer-Driven Regional Sector Initiatives

Coordination of the core, required and optional program partners in each region and local area of the state will be required for Illinois to achieve the goal of coordinated business services. As noted in Section III.a.2.A, the support of employer-driven sector initiatives is a key WIOA strategy. Illinois will expand business engagement across the workforce system in order to align training with needed skills, and to match companies with qualified workers and workforce needs, pointing the state towards the creation of a talent pipeline that fuels economic growth and creates career pathways for all citizens of Illinois.

Illinois will continue to focus on the development of employer-based training options that work directly with businesses to identify hiring requirements, assess the skill levels of job seekers, and provide competency-based training to quickly fill skill gaps, prepare individuals to go to work, and allow employers to increase their productivity while reducing their hiring risk. Using approaches such as apprenticeships, internships, job shadowing, work experience, and on-the-job training provides employers with a quicker method to fill critical job openings while providing trainees with a quicker route to a paycheck.

The Workforce Innovation Fund Round I project (known as Accelerated Training in Manufacturing or ATIM) provided an opportunity to test strategies intended to deliver improved outcomes for participants and businesses. Goals in this plan address providing improved career services and improved business services. Based on the promising performance of this project, United States Department of Labor (DOL) Region V recommended to the DOL National Office that Illinois be included in its Sector Strategies Technical Assistance initiative. Beginning in late 2014, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce), Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) and Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) partnered with the support of noted sector strategies expert Lyndsey Woolsey and technical experts at Maher & Maher to create a statewide framework for fostering the development of employer-led sector partnerships. The framework was completed in May 2015 and was followed by regional training events for cross-program local staff and education and training provider partners. The end goal of this framework is to provide meaningful guidance for stakeholders to understand how to foster the development of employer-led partnerships and how to leverage their work to improve services to both businesses and job seekers.

This effort segued directly into a private-sector initiative administered by the United States Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Talent Pipeline Management. These same partners leveraged the experience of developing the sector strategies framework to support an application and subsequent implementation of a grant to Vermilion Advantage, a local employer-led multi-sector public-private partnership in Vermilion County. The core premise of Talent Pipeline Management is that businesses must apply supply-chain management principles to talent and must organize themselves into regional sector-based partnerships in order to nudge the public education and workforce systems into being nimbler and more responsive to evolving needs of employers. The following foundational principles of Talent Pipeline Management each provide an opportunity for the core partner programs to explore methods of improving business services.

- Employers play a new leadership role as the end-customer in closing the skills gap for those jobs most critical to their competitiveness.
- Employers proactively organize and manage flexible and responsive talent pipelines in partnership with their preferred education and workforce providers.
- Employers work collaboratively with their partners to develop measures and incentives designed to reinforce and improve performance across all partners.

Likewise, the following Talent Pipeline Management strategies present an opportunity for the core partners to make great use of the new flexibility and emphasis on collaboration and alignment under WIOA.

- Development of employer collaboratives in states or regions;
- Demand planning for critical jobs in key sectors;
- Communication of competency and credentialing requirements;
- Analyze talent flows;
- Build talent supply chains; and
- Continuous improvement.

Working together and with Vermilion Advantage, the Interagency Data Team conducted groundbreaking work on talent flow analysis. This is commonly known as back-mapping and is used to identify from where employers are sourcing their best candidates, and the organizations and programs of study from which those candidates originated. The intent is to raise the performance of all schools and providers to the level of the best performers to create a more robust talent pipeline. In this effort, the state partners contributed the following in support of the project:

- Commerce provided coordination of local and state partners and leadership on implementation of sector strategies, demand planning, and communication of occupational competencies;
- Employment Security provided labor market information (LMI) data and analysis for demand planning and occupational competencies, and information about their Career Information System used by students;

- ICCB provided data on students dual-enrolled in high school and community college and information on how programs of study can become nimbler.

The Vermilion Advantage project in 2015 was one of seven initial national pilot sites. As of late 2019, the Talent Pipeline Management initiative has created dozens of employer collaboratives in 29 states. In 2019 two staff from Commerce and a dozen local staff from Title I and Title III completed US Chamber training in Talent Pipeline Management. Going forward, Commerce is exploring partnerships with local chambers to fill additional Talent Pipeline Academies in 2020 and beyond in support of this sector strategy approach to meeting business talent needs.

The lessons learned from the Workforce Innovation Fund (ATIM), Unified Business Services Analysis and Talent Pipeline Management continue to inform the development of Integrated Business Services implementation plans.

E. Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions

Illinois has an unprecedented education and workforce collaboration due to our common goal to expand career pathway opportunities through accelerated work-based training while aligning and integrating programs of study that lead to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings. The stakeholders involved include The Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board, the Illinois Departments of Commerce (Commerce), Employment Security, Human Services (DHS), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Adult Education and the Perkins Postsecondary Career and Technical Education programs, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) and the Illinois P-20 Council. Additionally, workforce professionals, local level educational institutions and business/industry representatives have significantly engaged in this work.

The state's workforce system has always closely aligned with the community college system -- including postsecondary career and technical education and adult education systems and business and industry training/corporate training centers -- in the delivery of training that supports the growing demand for trained workers. While the state recognizes the importance of ensuring career and work readiness at all levels, Illinois is moving toward strategies that integrate education and workforce development. This is evident in the ICCB's Workforce Education Strategic Plan, the Adult Education and Literacy Strategic Plan and the Perkins V State Plan. Expanding on the close alignment with postsecondary entities, Illinois is moving to align career readiness efforts beginning at the secondary school level to the university system. This alignment will truly address the P-20 pipeline by providing necessary career readiness and occupational skills necessary to succeed in the job market. A specific example is the active collaboration across education and workforce systems to collectively define language that will guide development and implementation of aligned initiatives, such as the adoption of a definitional framework for career pathways, along with supporting guidelines.

As Illinois continues the engagement of educational institutions to offer an education and training system that is driven by the labor market, the state will make significant and strategic system improvements that address workforce development needs through flexible, responsive and progressive programs informed by labor market information. Not only will this continue to occur

through the 48 comprehensive community colleges and multi-college centers, but the state will also expand the reach to integrate meaningful career readiness programs and work-based learning models that focus on high demand occupations for students and workers at all levels.

Continued work, as well as new initiatives, will be rooted in labor market data that will inform education and workforce systems when establishing programs and training, thereby allocating resources to in-demand occupations and away from those jobs that have declining opportunities because of changing economic conditions. Additionally, employment and wage data will support measuring workforce outcomes of students to demonstrate performance and effectiveness of programs.

ICCB continues to work collaboratively across the state with other partners to address the alignment of workforce development, education and economic development. Through workforce development, postsecondary career and technical education and adult education, the Illinois community college system and ICCB have moved forward in a coordinated way, focusing on the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the ICCB Workforce Education Five Year Strategic Plan as well as the Adult Education Strategic Plan and the development of the Perkins V state plan. Additionally, sector/clusters initiatives such as manufacturing, healthcare and transportation, distribution and logistics with an emphasis on low-skilled and low-income adults through business and industry training, Professional and Continuing Education training, Programs of Study and continued Adult Education initiatives are all focused on meeting the needs of Illinois' employers and workforce. ICCB's ongoing partnerships with other agencies and entities such as the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) Office of Employment and Training (OET) are critical to addressing Illinois' economic and workforce needs.

House Resolution 371

Pursuant to House Resolution 371 of the 101st Illinois General Assembly, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) must report to the General Assembly and the P-20 Council on or before December 1, 2019 about how the State's draft versions of the Perkins and WIOA plans address the following recommendations as set forth by the General Assembly:

1. The Perkins Plan is inclusive of a funding methodology that incentivizes completion of aligned course sequences, early college credit, and work-based learning as part of college and career pathway systems extending from high school into postsecondary;
2. The Perkins Plan promotes the expansion of equitable access to high-quality career pathway systems to students across Illinois;
3. The Perkins Plan includes secondary program quality indicators that address both dual credit and work-based learning;
4. The Perkins Plan incentivizes innovative regional career pathway models incorporating the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act's College and Career Pathways Endorsements through Perkins Reserve funding;

5. The Perkins Plan includes the alignment of definitions and systems between the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act and the State's career pathways definitions;
6. ISBE, ICCB, and the IWIB shall work collaboratively with each other and with school districts, community colleges, business and industry, and other organizations to ensure alignment among the Perkins and WIOA plans and priority occupational areas; and,
7. The Perkins and WIOA Plans incorporate funding or structural mechanisms to support the following:
 - Improvements to the allocation of Perkins and WIOA funding,
 - Appropriate administrative capacity to effectively support local programs,
 - Maintenance of accurate and accessible data, and
 - Modernization of course coding frameworks and other administrative structures to better enable local innovation.

ISBE, ICCB, and IWIB drafted a joint response to the General Assembly and P-20 Council outlining their consideration of the recommendations, noting efforts where the Perkins V Plan and WIOA Plan will align.

Coordination with Core Programs

The ICCB, along with the core partners, developed the Essential Employability Framework to address issues identified by employers relative to their needs. In addition, Adult Education developed a Strategic Plan in partnership with core, required and other entities to address the preparation of adult learners for in-demand occupations. Below are specific examples of the core partners' engagement with educational institutions across the State.

Coordination with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

ICCB, in partnership with the Illinois Department of Commerce and the Illinois Community College Presidents' Council, engaged multiple stakeholders to develop a five-year Workforce Education Strategic Plan. This plan focuses on strengthening system-wide visibility and impact by aligning workforce, education (community colleges, career technical education, adult education) and training. The development of the Workforce Education Strategic Plan used a braided funding mechanism that utilized resources from multiple sources, including the Illinois Department of Commerce, Illinois Community College Board, Career Technical Education and Adult Education. As part of the plan, ICCB and Commerce held eleven regional forums in the spring of 2015, one in each of the ten Economic Development Regions (EDR) with two in the Northeast region to bring education, workforce and employer partners together to discuss workforce and education issues in their regions and to hear from employers regarding their most pressing concerns. A final report with strategic recommendations was released in 2015. The data and information compiled from the regional forums was leveraged to serve as a baseline for the WIOA regional planning process. The Illinois Community College System Strategic Plan for Workforce Education builds upon recent successful efforts and engaged cross-program teams to explore creative solutions to address the challenges of a new economy and the demand for more highly-skilled workers. The plan is also used as a foundation in

the development of other strategic plans, including the Adult Education Strategic Plan and the IWIB Strategic Plan.

Commerce also collaborates with universities and the K-12 system through participation on groups convened by the IWIB, the Illinois State Board of Education and Board of Higher Education, such as, the Illinois P-20 Council, the 60 X 25 Network, the Illinois Longitudinal Data System and the Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeship and Pathways group. Commerce also makes direct investments in workforce skill training and capacity-building through grants to educational institutions that apply for WIOA Statewide Activities funds.

Coordination with the Illinois Department of Employment Security

Illinois recognizes that labor market information is at the foundation of a job-driven education and training system. As outlined in Section II.a (Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis), Illinois' Interagency Data Team includes the Economic Information and Analysis (EI&A) Division of the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) that produces industry and occupation projections by Local Workforce Innovation Area (LWIA). These projections allow educational institutions to consider in-demand jobs when establishing educational programs and training by LWIA, as well as the surrounding areas thereby allocating resources to in-demand occupations and away from those occupations that have declining interest because of changing economic conditions. EI&A also works with educational institutions to measure the workforce outcomes of their students. This allows educational institutions to measure the performance and effectiveness of their programs.

Coordination with the Illinois Department of Human Services

The Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is actively involved in supporting people with disabilities who wish to participate in community college programs in pursuit of a degree or a credential to improve their employment opportunities. In 2019, DRS served 2,464 individuals with disabilities through support for their education and vocational training programs at Illinois community colleges. Since 2011, DRS has operated the Community College Initiative, which provides financial incentives for individuals with disabilities to enroll in community college programs. Since that time enrollment at community colleges has nearly tripled from a baseline of about 900 students. DRS is working with ICCB to facilitate participation by individuals with disabilities, whether or not those individuals are enrolled in the DRS Vocational Rehabilitation program. The two agencies are working in conjunction with the Institute for Community Inclusion to identify strategies for maximizing participation by people with disabilities across the range of programs offered in community colleges.

F. Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers.

The K-12 system, community colleges, four-year colleges, universities and other training providers in Illinois play important roles in helping residents pursue credentials that will help them access high-skill, high-wage jobs. Partnerships with high schools ensure graduates are college-ready. Dual credit opportunities, transfer assistance, recognition for prior learning and other innovative approaches help learners, particularly low-income individuals, move through the P-20 pipeline. The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) plays an instrumental role in working with education councils

and boards, such as, the Illinois Community College Board, State Board of Education, the Board of Higher Education, and the P-20 Council to develop policies and activities that include engagement with other educational and training providers.

In addition to the WIOA Unified Plan, Illinois is using the following high-priority strategic planning initiatives to guide the engagement of education and training providers across the system. These initiatives will act as the building blocks for creating a cohesive job-driven education and training system. Furthermore, Illinois is bringing stakeholders together to further align the education and workforce systems by cross-walking respective plans. Illinois has created the Interagency Implementation Team, which is designated to oversee and monitor implementation of plans and related initiatives that address the common threads found in education, economic development and workforce development. The Interagency Implementation Team is a cross-agency team representing education (both secondary and postsecondary), workforce, human services, commerce and other stakeholders.

- Governor's Executive Order 2019-03: In January 2019, the Governor directed Illinois state agencies, led by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, to review current and potential industries targeted for economic growth and recommend how workforce resources can be better aligned to serve disenfranchised populations in communities throughout Illinois. Out of the EO 3, came the Action Agenda for Workforce Development and Job Creation. The Governor's vision along with the goals and strategies of this plan are woven throughout this State Plan.
- Perkins V: This statewide and local planning process is required by the US Department of Education and is developed jointly by staff at ICCB and ISBE. These individuals also serve on the WIOA Unified State Plan development team. The purpose of the CTE State Plan is to guide the strategic partnership and alignment between ICCB and ISBE in order to strengthen career and technical education (CTE) in Illinois. The plan describes the processes and policies that will be carried out by ISBE, ICCB, and the local education agencies and community colleges, who are responsible for local administration of Perkins dollars. Activities within the State Plan aim to achieve the State's Vision and Goals for creating an educated and skilled workforce, in partnership with many state and local partners.
- 5-Year Economic Development Plan: This plan lays out the Governor's vision to reinvigorate the economy and spur equitable growth. Three priorities guide the plan: Laying the Foundation for Long-Term Growth, Reduce the Equity Gap, and Attract More Workers and Businesses to Illinois. Seven Industry Clusters are highlighted for emphasis over the next five years. These include: agriculture/agriculture tech, energy, information technology, life sciences/health care, manufacturing, transportation/logistics and small business.
- Every Student Succeeds Act State Plan: A result of federal legislation and lead by ISBE, the ESSA State plan outlines ISBE's goals to implement a holistic, comprehensive, and coordinated system of support that prepares each and every student for academic excellence and postsecondary success. Most relevant to this project is the College and Career Readiness Indicator (CCRI) that is embedded in the plan's school quality framework, which the United States Department of Education highlighted as an example of a unique and progressive indicator. The CCRI will measure and incentivize Illinois high schools' efforts to ensure that

students identify career areas of interest and engage in career readiness activities, such as the attainment of industry credentials and completion of internships.

- **Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act:** The Illinois PWR ACT, signed into law on July 29, 2016, specifies implementation strategies to better align the transition from high school into college and careers. This act includes a framework for Postsecondary and Career Expectations (PaCE), College and Career Pathway Endorsements, Transitional Math Instruction, and pilots of Competency-based high school graduation requirements. The high school graduating class of 2020 will include the first high school graduates obtaining College and Career Pathway Endorsements. More than 100 high schools across the State are in various phases of implementation of Pathway Endorsements. Transitional Math instruction is scaling across the State, with full statewide implementation to occur in the 2021-22 school year. State agencies are in the process of launching the statewide approach to Transitional English.
- **ICCB Workforce Education Strategic Plan:** Led by ICCB, the Workforce Education Strategic Plan outlines the goals and objectives for four priority areas that will achieve alignment of the community college system and the state’s workforce development system with economic development directions and workforce needs, thereby creating a talent pipeline that fuels economic growth and creates career pathways for all Illinoisans.
- **ICCB Adult Education Strategic Plan:** Led by ICCB, the Adult Education Strategic Plan outlines four strategic goals and multiple objectives that will be “Expanding Career Pathway Opportunities in Adult Education” and aligning with the directions set forth under the state workforce system.
- **Career Outcomes for Illinois High School Seniors:** Lead by IDES in partnership with ISU, ISAC, and ISBE, the first of two phases identifies intergenerational mobility pathways for high school seniors and evaluates the impact of learning pathways on career job profiles and career job earnings for high school seniors. Additionally, this partnership includes ICCB and IBHE as they work to produce workforce outcomes, life-long learning, and intergenerational mobility metrics for high school seniors and postsecondary community college and higher education completers.
- **Common Pathway Program Information Initiative:** Utilizing the interagency career pathway definition, DCEO, ICCB, and IBHE are partnering to collect common career pathway program information across WIOA-funded programs, apprenticeships, community college certification and adult education programs, and private business and vocational schools. This project will result in consistent processes for the collection and broad dissemination of career pathway program information for potential participants, state agencies, local pathway system administrators and other stakeholders.

Lessons learned from these initiatives will inform the certification of eligible training providers and the collection of their performance outcomes. An IWIB Policy Workgroup will build on these lessons to enhance the current policy, strengthen training policy definitions and inform continuous improvement related to the minimum training expenditure requirement. The IWIB, along with the education and workforce partners and other stakeholder groups, will also use what is learned to develop and implement best practice strategies. These will support education and training providers

in using labor market information as a way to be demand-driven and encourage the use of work-based learning best practices.

G. Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access

Illinois has developed partnerships to leverage resources in order to increase educational and training opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment. Illinois will leverage partnerships with high schools and other educational institutions to ensure that more students are provided with dual credit opportunities, transfer assistance, recognition for prior learning, and other innovative approaches to help learners, particularly low-income individuals, move through the P-20 pipeline.

Under the leadership of the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), Illinois has expanded policies that require all adult education providers to offer bridge program instruction related to high demand occupations. Bridge programs offer students cluster level knowledge and skills while building basic literacy skills, career exploration and awareness, as well as support services that assist the student accessing post-secondary education and pathway employment. Through this policy, bridge program delivery has expanded to more than 60 programs. The remaining programs are working to partner to develop services to students. Comprehensive professional development activities have been developed to increase the knowledge of adult educators in the development of contextualized bridge career pathway programs.

ICCB administers over \$30 million annually in state and federal post-secondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) grants to community colleges in support of postsecondary CTE programs and students across the state. The intent is to provide students with the academic and technical skills necessary to succeed in a knowledge and skills-based economy, and to gain employment in a high-skill, high-wage and high-demand occupation. It focuses on certain themes, such as increasing state and local accountability standards, integrating academic and technical education, strengthening the connections between secondary and post-secondary education, and restructuring the way stakeholders - high schools, community colleges, universities, business and parents - work together. ICCB will continue to support community colleges in the implementation of CTE-related programs and activities including academic and career guidance services.

Illinois will continue to invest in adult education initiatives that provide the opportunity for adult education students to earn industry-recognized credentials, college certificates and college credit while studying to obtain a high school equivalency certificate or learn the English language. Through the Integrated Education and Training (IET) program in Illinois, Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS), many students will be connected to Title I programs to ensure they are able to gain access to resources for training and employment opportunities upon completion.

Illinois Workforce Innovation Fund

Illinois will implement the best practices from the Illinois Workforce Innovation Fund initiative, Accelerated Training in Manufacturing, that demonstrated the feasibility of providing accelerated training for industry credentials that incorporated lean principles and multiple modes of work-based learning. Several community colleges (Harper College, Lake Land College, Richland Community College and Danville Area Community College, among others) and private training providers such as Symbol Training Institute, have each found innovative ways to improve responsiveness to

businesses and job seekers. The core partners each have access to funding that can be used to incent colleges and trainers to adopt these best practices and/or help reduce the out-of-pocket cost to job seekers in need of education and technical skill upgrades.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant Program

In Illinois, Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants include regional teams made up of various partners led by community colleges. Through this strategy, specific regional sector needs have been addressed, such as advanced manufacturing. Additionally, Illinois received awards in the green economy, bio-energy and a multi-state initiative along the Mississippi River. Known as MRTL, the Mississippi River Transportation, Logistics and Distribution Consortium is committed to advancing economic development in the Mississippi River region, from the headwaters to the Gulf and are dedicated to the placement of dislocated and other workers in high wage, high skill occupations in Transportation and Distribution Logistics and related industry sectors. Illinois has been very successful with TAACCCT both in terms of the ability to address specific sector needs and in terms of generating grant dollars and in bringing diverse partners together to address economic and workforce needs in the state and in partnership across state borders.

Illinois Apprenticeship Plus

Illinois will continue to use ApprenticeshipUSA and WIOA Statewide Activities funds to support the expansion of apprenticeships and work-based learning through the Talent Pipeline and Youth Career Pathway Programs. Both funding opportunities are focused on providing opportunities to the targeted populations outlined in Illinois' Unified Plan.

H. Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials

A key to robust career pathways is portable, stackable credentials that are incorporated fully into the system, particularly at the post-secondary level. Fortunately, in Illinois, the commitment of the postsecondary CTE system to portable, stackable credentials is longstanding and is now rapidly expanding to better connect to the K-12 system through the strategic initiatives mentioned under subsection F "Partner Engagement with other Education and Training Providers" – in particular, the implementation of the PWR Act. These key accomplishments that came to fruition in 2017 incentivize cross-system engagement, leveraging resources and improving access to post-secondary credentials.

ESSA College and Career Readiness

The Illinois State Board of Education's work over the past year has centered on the development and implementation of Illinois' Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan. The principle of equity undergirds the entire plan: each and every child receives the supports she or he requires in order to be successful in school and life. ISBE engaged in a 16-month collaborative process to create the plan, which, among other requirements, sets forth a new accountability system for all Illinois schools. The United States Department of Education approved the plan on August 30, 2017.

The plan introduces a new statewide system of support for schools and districts, called IL-EMPOWER, to improve student outcomes by leveraging schools' strengths and building school staff capacity. ISBE believes the educators closest to students have the most valuable insight into their

strengths, challenges, context and history. This belief is a pillar upon which differentiated supports are developed. ISBE launched a pilot program with several dozen districts over the 2017-18 school year to further determine the specifics of the IL-EMPOWER structure for the statewide launch that occurred in the 2018-19 school year.

The Illinois ESSA Plan identifies three areas within its school quality framework for which stakeholders have provided recommendations to ISBE on the Indicators and definitions for the College and Career Readiness Indicator. The working committees are composed of practicing educators, regional superintendents, individuals from other educational advocacy groups, and in the case of the College and Career Readiness group, members of the business and civic communities. All the committees are also utilizing the support of outside experts. The committees shared their recommendations with ISBE by December 31, 2017, and presented them to the State Board of Education on January 17, 2018. In addition, the Technical Advisory Council is developing recommendations for the performance levels and growth indicators in the accountability system. The Illinois ESSA plan amendment #1 was approved by U. S. Department of Education on September 10, 2019.

Competency-Based High School Pilots & College and Career Pathway Endorsements (PWR Act)

Public Act 99-0674 (the “Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act”) passed unanimously through both state legislative Houses and was signed into law on July 29, 2016. The Act contains four components:

- It establishes a Postsecondary and Career Expectations framework (PaCE),
- It develops a competency-based high school graduation requirements pilot program,
- It defines high school coursework and criteria that will place students into college credit-bearing work – transitional mathematics instruction, and
- It creates a framework for college and career pathway endorsements on high school diplomas.

In 2017, ISBE, ICCB, IBHE, and ISAC all adopted the same PaCE framework that outlines what students should know about college and career each year from 8th to 12th grade. The framework outlines in an integrated way career exploration and development; college exploration, preparation and selection; and financial literacy and how to access financial aid opportunities. ISAC is leading professional development for community teams across the State that are adapting the PaCE framework for their local context.

The Act established the Competency-Based High School Graduation Requirements Pilot Program as one strategy to prepare more students for meaningful college and career opportunities. This pilot enables participating districts to utilize a framework based on assessment of the skills and knowledge students have mastered rather than how much time they have spent in class as high school graduation requirements. In April 2017, ISBE announced 10 school districts as participants in the first cohort of the program. Participating districts convened in September 2017 to study national best practices, build relationships, find points of connection, and begin moving their pilots from vision to action. In November 2017, ISBE released the request for applications for the second cohort of the Competency Pilot Program. ISBE has been working with national experts to support districts in their redesign of the high school experience around what students know and where they want to go. Competency-

based learning recognizes students' individual starting points and allows them to pave a personalized pathway with no ceiling. Most of the first cohort programs have a strong emphasis on career pathways and the integration of work-based learning into their competency-based models.

The third component of the PWR Act defines transitional math courses to provide a mathematical foundation that will provide high school students with the opportunity to gain mathematical knowledge and skills that reduce the need for remediation and will, therefore, help them to meet their individualized college and career goals and to be successful in college-level math courses. Aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards, these courses will reduce remediation rates for students who successfully complete the transitional math course approved for statewide portability and will receive guaranteed placement at any Illinois community college. A statewide panel established by ISBE, ICCB and IBHE has been drafting policies and competencies intended to guide community colleges and high schools as they jointly create transitional math courses and instructional approaches. According to the Act, by no later than June 30, 2019, ISBE and ICCB must have jointly established a phased implementation plan and benchmarks leading to full statewide implementation of transitional mathematics instruction in all school districts, with timeframes that account for State and local resources and capacity (scaling occurring over the next 4-5 years). Approximately 30% of Illinois high schools planned to implement transitional math or launch a program during the 2018-19 school year. ISBE and ICCB are assessing the impact of this effort.

The fourth component of the PWR Act establishes a voluntary system for school districts to award college and career pathways endorsements on high school diplomas. This is a voluntary program for public high schools to recognize graduates who complete a career-focused instructional sequence, as well as requirements including an individualized plan, professional learning and readiness for non-remedial coursework. This endorsement validates students' completion of instruction and professional learning experiences in a selected career interest area. ISBE, ICCB, IBHE, ISAC, DCEO and IDES adopted a comprehensive interagency plan in June 2017 to support the development of the College and Career Pathway Endorsement programs, which includes a commitment to incorporate endorsements into planning and programs of study as part of Perkins reauthorization. ISBE's College and Career Readiness Indicator incentivizes endorsements as a method for a student to demonstrate college and career readiness. In addition, the agencies, working with the P-20 Council and Jobs for the Future, launched public-private sector-based committees that recommended a sequence of minimum career competencies for pathways in Finance and Business Services, Health Sciences, IT, Manufacturing/Engineering, Arts & Communication, and Education. These competencies can be used to inform pathways course sequencing, course content and the focus of work-based learning experiences.

Pro Path Illinois

Illinois' systems currently collect inadequate information about career pathway programs and outcomes for Illinois residents pursuing nontraditional postsecondary education and workforce training. Without this information, under- and unemployed youth and adults make sub-optimal selections of education, training, and employment. Lacking awareness of diverse postsecondary options, guides for youth and adults (such as counselors, career navigators, and advisors at community-based organizations) are unable to effectively and comprehensively advise and support these individuals as they seek education and employment. Finally, funders and State entities cannot

adequately evaluate the efficacy and connectivity of the system at large to drive continuous improvement and funding decisions. To address these challenges, DCEO sought, and was awarded, a \$1 million Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) grant in Spring 2019, proposing “Pro Path Illinois”. Pro Path Illinois is comprised of two aligned components to enhance programmatic data collected in administrative data across agencies and generate greater analytic capacity to report on program efficacy and outcomes.

The Common Program Information (CPI) of Pro Path Illinois will establish greater cohesion across state administrative systems for sub-associate credential program data to capture CPI most important for career pathway decision-making. Further, the project will empower under- and unemployed youth and adults with comprehensive and actionable information on sub-associate career pathway programs to make optimal decisions about their educational and career pathways, as well as with improved guidance to navigate the information and decision-making process.

The Illinois Administrative Data Research Facility (I-ADRF) Expansion project will expand the I-ADRF to significantly grow State capacity to evaluate program impact and report on career outcomes. This information will support decision-making for potential participants and enable State agencies and the philanthropic community to direct scarce resources to scale successful programs. At its core, this portion of the project involves (1) incorporating additional agency datasets into the I-ADRF; (2) creating new career pathway program evaluation frameworks and conducting analyses of system/program efficacy; and, (3) generating new reports and dashboards to provide accessible information to a range of stakeholders.

Early College Credit

Dual Credit is 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. There are three major models of delivery: 1) at the high school taught by a qualified high school instructor; 2) at the high school taught by a college instructor; and 3) at the college taught by a college instructor. The most common model, and the one that most think of when considering dual credit is the first. Dual credit courses may range from transfer courses, such as English 101 to career and technical education courses, such as Medical Terminology.

According to the most recent ICCB data (FY2018), 59,039 students participated, taking a total of 117,672 dual credit classes. This represents a steady increase over the previous two years. To support the growing number of quality programs, the ICCB expands dual credit offerings through the Dual Credit Enhancement Grant. Funding supports dual credit expansion, innovation and quality through various activities including, professional development, curriculum development, implementation, wraparound services and assessment of models. To maintain quality of offerings but expand access for motivated high school students, the ICCB relaxed its student grade level rules to allow academically-qualified students to participate in dual credit offerings. The ICCB is also working with the public university system to enhance teacher-credentialing options that will lead to a growth in dual credit in areas where qualified faculty are often difficult to find. Dual credit impacts college readiness, leads to higher first-year postsecondary GPAs, higher completion rates and a greater accumulation of college credits overall. It also decreases time to degree and lowers college costs for students.

Dual credit also maximizes state and local resources and promotes collaboration between secondary and post-secondary education institutions. As a leader in dual credit, the ICCB works collaboratively with secondary and post-secondary stakeholders to expand student access to higher education while simultaneously maintaining the high academic standards expected of the Illinois Community College System. In an effort to support and augment dual credit programs around the state, the ICCB has supported the dual credit enhancement grant. This grant encourages the creation and implementation of innovative strategies in the areas of: dual credit offerings, curriculum alignment, instructional models, faculty recruitment efforts and professional development.

Higher Education Commission on the Future of Workforce

Illinois' higher education system is an essential partner with the state's businesses and industries, government agencies, elected officials and economic development policymakers to ensure that the state has an educated workforce to meet the needs of Illinois' employers. These key stakeholders are working towards the same goal: to increase the number of Illinoisans with high-quality postsecondary credentials and degrees to meet the demands of the Illinois economy. Through a joint resolution issued in 2016, partners across the education and workforce system came together to examine current and projected workforce needs in the economic regions of the state; identify the higher education and business partners to meet regional workforce demands; and recommend effective practices and policies for key stakeholders to scale up efforts to match degree production with needs of the workforce around the state. Recommendations from the study validated the work that Illinois is doing and will continue to do to align with the IWIB's vision for creating a job-driven education system and improve access to the necessary postsecondary credentials that will support these efforts.

Credentialing Initiative

Illinois recognizes that Career and Technical Education (CTE) students at a community college do not always fit the model of transition implied in the Perkins definition. Thus, the state moved early to adopt a more holistic career pathways approach to implementation. For example, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) CTE division partnered with Adult Education to develop the Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS). The purpose is to provide integrated CTE and Adult Education instruction so adult students can earn at least one "stackable," credit-bearing, post-secondary education credential, as well as industry-recognized credentials that lead to high-wage employment in Illinois. In integrated programs, career and technical educators teach classes alongside adult education instructors, ensuring that students receive not only integrated curricula inclusive of basic skills enhancements, but also curricula tied to the latest in industry standards developed in partnership with employers.

The ICCB will continue to participate in initiatives to promote career pathway programs in Adult Education, including the Integrated Education and Training (IET) models." These initiatives focus on a blending of both Adult Education and CTE instruction to provide an integrated model of instruction using a team-teaching approach. Additionally, the ICAPS model 2 blends adult education instruction with stackable credentials and industry-recognized credentials. Both the Adult Education and CTE Divisions of the ICCB have partnered on this project and have worked to expand the number of colleges from eight to fifty-two. The initiative allows adult learners without a high school diploma the opportunity to gain college-level credit and certificates, including college and industry-recognized

credentials around in-demand occupations while working toward learning English, high school equivalency and/or increasing basic skills.

Improving Access to Apprenticeships

Illinois will leverage multiple initiatives to further integrate apprenticeship opportunities across the required and optional program partners throughout the state. The Governor has mobilized a broad cross-section of apprenticeship stakeholders to drive this important planning process. Representing a range of perspectives and resources, these individuals are serving on the Illinois Apprenticeship Committee (a standing committee of the IWIB) and oversee this planning and implementation effort. Members of this Committee include representatives of the IWIB, the four WIOA core state agency partners, business representatives, training providers, Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIB), labor, philanthropies, community colleges, rehabilitation services and employment exchange services.

The use of apprenticeships is being encouraged through demonstration projects, policy guidance and technical assistance. With increased attention given to various forms of work-based learning, it is expected that the number of apprenticeships will expand as WIOA is implemented. Illinois will learn from best practices and expand on programs that are effective. The IWIB Apprenticeship Committee has been advancing several initiatives: (1) United States Department of Labor (US DOL) State Accelerator grant, (2) USDOL State Apprenticeship Expansion grant, and (3) The Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeship and Pathways (WRAP) Project.

The ICCB was awarded a USDOL "Scaling Apprenticeships Through Sector-Based Strategies" grant designed to expand pre-apprenticeships and registered and non-registered apprenticeships in the information technology sector. The grant allows for pre-apprenticeships and registered and non-registered apprenticeships. The grant will increase the number of apprentices by 1728 over four years. Ten community colleges will provide apprenticeship opportunities under the USDOL grant, titled Customized Apprenticeship Programming - Information Technology or CAP-IT. Also, ICCB conducts a yearly survey on apprenticeships with the community colleges and will be conducting the next one in the spring of 2020. This survey is designed to capture both non-registered and registered apprenticeships along with other information.

The two grants from the USDOL complement each other. The State Accelerator Grants were given to states to help develop their strategic plan and build partnerships for apprenticeship expansion and diversification with state education, workforce and economic development systems. The Apprenticeship Committee decided to take a regional approach by fostering relationships and promoting apprenticeships based on the needs of each of the ten economic development regions. Roundtables are being convened throughout the State with employers, education providers, local workforce area representatives, service providers, community-based organizations and WIOA agencies to discuss needs and barriers to promote the expansion and creation of apprenticeship programs.

The State Apprenticeship Expansion Grants were given to states to help expand Registered Apprenticeship in existing and innovative industries, specifically targeting underserved populations

such as women, persons with disabilities, communities of color, opportunity youth, individuals transitioning from incarceration and low-income people. The Apprenticeship Committee decided to build on the regional approach taken with the State Accelerator Grant by promoting apprenticeship expansion and engaging industries and businesses based on the needs of the different regions. Through discussion, the Committee decided to launch the Illinois Apprenticeship Plus Framework, a comprehensive and integrated apprenticeship system for Illinois, via a competitive grant process. The Apprenticeship Committee oversaw the development, review and release of a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Using the funds from the Apprenticeship Expansion grant, this NOFO is now funding three pilot projects that will expand Registered Apprenticeship in construction, manufacturing and transportation, distribution and logistics (TDL).

The Apprenticeship Committee serves as an advisory body to The Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth WRAP project. Members of the Apprenticeship Committee serve along with representatives from IBHE, ICCB, ISBE, DoIT, Employment Security, IDHS, Commerce and the Governor’s Office. The focus of this project is to ensure all youth have the opportunity to learn about and the ability to obtain high-quality and stackable industry-recognized credentials or degrees utilizing work-based learning models within a career pathway that will lead to self-sufficiency. Apprenticeship programs are an authentic and proven entry point onto a career pathway and are a key component of a robust broader career pathways system. This project is focused on aligning apprenticeship with Career Pathways and other, ongoing efforts within the K-12 system, such as the Postsecondary Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), P-20 Council, the “60 by 25” Network, Talent Pipeline Management, and Pathways to Results, as well as the NGA Work-Based Learning Policy Academy Illinois.

Prior to releasing the NOFO to expand Registered Apprenticeship, the Apprenticeship Committee collaborated with industry partners and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to engage hundreds of businesses within the state to promote the Apprenticeship Plus Framework. These businesses, along with local workforce innovation area representatives and service providers, were invited to webinars and regional roundtables held in Southern Cook County, Springfield and Mt. Vernon. At the webinars and roundtables, participants were introduced to the Apprenticeship Plus Framework, available funding opportunities and other resources on how to start or expand apprenticeships in their organization or region and the benefits and costs of doing so.

Similar to the business and industry roundtables, the Apprenticeship Committee collaborated with The Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth to hold a series of Youth Roundtables. The Young Invincibles, a community-based organization that works out of Chicago to expand economic opportunity for young adults in Illinois, led the Youth Roundtables aimed at gathering feedback from young adults and supporting staff. They focused on youth apprenticeships and explored what makes youth apprenticeships exciting, what could keep the program from being successful, and how Illinois should facilitate partnerships and market these opportunities. Over 125 youth and staff attended in Mt. Vernon, Peoria and Hillside. Between 12 and 25 youth attended each roundtable, coming from community colleges, foster care, the juvenile justice system, apprenticeship worksites, workforce development programs and agencies (including Department of Employment Security, Department of Human Services, Department of Children and Family Services, and the Community College Board).

The Young Invincibles produced a report from the research and findings, “Making Youth Apprenticeships Work for Illinois’ Young Adults.”

To create more interest in Registered Apprenticeship and to increase the talent pipeline, a NOFO to fund up to 10 youth apprenticeship pilot programs in three economic development regions (EDRs) of the state was released. With a funding total of approximately \$2.3 million from statewide activity funds, nine youth apprenticeship pilot programs were launched late summer 2017. These will serve up to 304 youth, both in-school and out-of-school, focusing on one of four industries: Construction and building trades, Manufacturing, Healthcare or IT. Participants have the opportunity to earn industry-recognized credentials, such as Certified Medical Assistant, CompTIA A+ certification, Cisco Networking, NCCER Carpentry, and NIMS Manufacturing as part of these apprenticeship programs. All of these credentials are within a career pathway. These pilots have partnerships with over a dozen businesses to provide mentorship and work-based learning opportunities.

Since 2017, each year the Governor has issued a proclamation in support of National Apprenticeship Week. In 2019, Governor Pritzker kicked-off National Apprenticeship Week (Nov. 11 - Nov. 17, 2019) in Illinois with a press event in Springfield at the state capital. Apprentices and their host companies from around the state were on hand with the Governor, Lt. Governor Stratton and Director Erin Guthrie of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. The apprentices and companies presented a number of sectors and business groups like the Chicago Apprentice Network, Illinois Manufacturers Association, Illinois Workforce Partnership, the Illinois Community College Board and employers representing banking & finances, IT, manufacturing, construction and the trades, insurance, healthcare, automotive, retail, hospitality and service and even the National Corn To Ethanol Research Center – the only center of its kind in the world.

Finally, to further the role of apprenticeship as an effective work-based learning model into a career pathway, the Apprenticeship Committee created three subcommittees: Business Engagement, Marketing Strategy, and Services and Systems. Members of the Apprenticeship Committee are leading these teams and are beginning the process of identifying objectives, priorities, activities and strategies for each. These three subcommittees are a direct result of feedback given by businesses, local workforce boards, educational institutions and others.

I. Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies

Coordination of Regional and Local Planning

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) is the state agency that leads economic development efforts for Illinois and is responsible for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title IB and Trade Training Program activities. Commerce is also responsible for the administration of the required and allowed Governor’s Statewide Workforce Activities as outlined in WIOA. It is recognized that supporting innovative workforce programs that connect employers to a highly skilled workforce is central to Illinois’ commitment to ensure that businesses thrive in Illinois. Toward that end, the state is coordinating a data/demand-driven strategic planning process across education, workforce and economic development at the state, regional and local levels using Illinois’ ten Economic Development Regions (EDR). The use of the ten EDRs illustrates Illinois’ commitment to data-driven economic development in the state. Commerce’s

Regional Economic Development Regional Managers and supporting staff are responsible for managing business relationships, developing business plans and cultivating customer relationships and company growth in their assigned regions or territories. The goal is to provide a one-stop resource focus on providing customized services to business including:

- Intergovernmental Coordination
- Technical Assistance with Site Selection
- Regional Collaboration with Key Stakeholders
- Assistance Eliminating Governmental Red Tape
- Custom Workforce Training
- Expedited Permitting, Licensing & Other Approvals
- Connection to Civic & Business Partners
- Potential Financial Support

Commerce will also connect the core and required partners with the latest economic development initiatives in the state. For example, the State of Illinois, in partnership with Intersect Illinois and the Illinois Economic Development Association is introducing a new statewide business outreach and retention initiative called, CORE: Creating Opportunities for Retention and Expansion. The first step in this process is to conduct in-depth training sessions designed to explain this statewide alliance, instruct communities on specific steps of participation, and to coordinate specific measures aimed at meeting the growth and development needs of local/regional employers. A key goal of this initiative is to better coordinate and communicate with business. These activities are in direct alignment with the regional planning, business coordination and sector strategies outlined in this plan. The reauthorization of the Perkins Act marks a unique opportunity for local workforce boards to partner with secondary and postsecondary Perkins recipients (community colleges) on their local WIOA and Perkins Plans, respectively. Perkins recipients will be required to conduct a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, inclusive local workforce boards, WIOA partners and employers. This assessment will inform regional and local planning and may be a tool used to inform local planning for WIOA. This coordination of planning should result in alignment of resources and services in each local area.

Coordination of Economic Development Activities and Business Services

The State of Illinois understands that in order to give businesses and job seekers the workforce services they need, we need to better integrate our delivery services to business. Illinois' Integrated Business Service Framework provides the foundation for workforce, education and economic development partners to better listen to, learn from and respond to Illinois' businesses. This framework was developed by a statewide group of business leaders and workforce partners and is meant to identify the elements and requirements of an integrated business services model for state and regional programs that will best equip them to understand and meet the ongoing workforce needs of Illinois' businesses.

Support for Employer-Driven Regional Sector Initiatives

Illinois has embraced the concept of employer-led sector partnerships as a vehicle to become nimbler in meeting the needs of business. Commerce, the Illinois Department of Employment Security

(Employment Security) and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) have collaborated on sector strategies for years, including the Workforce Innovation Fund manufacturing project, creating the State Sector Strategy Framework and the Talent Pipeline Management Initiative. Illinois is currently working to expand the successful pilot with Vermilion Advantage in the East Central Illinois region to other regions of the state. In late 2019, several cross-agency teams working on apprenticeship expansion grants completed the US Chamber Talent Pipeline Management Academy and are now positioned to start fieldwork in forming regional sector-based employer collaboratives. The next round of grantees will be awarded in early 2020 and they also are expected to receive Talent Pipeline Management training. In addition, over the next four years, Commerce staff intends to increase its staff support of public awareness of sector strategies which includes the TPM initiative. This effort will include engaging with local chambers of commerce, business and industry groups, local chapters of the Society for Human Resources Management, local economic development agencies and local workforce boards.

As noted above, Commerce's regional economic development staff actively engaged in the regional workshops and planning meetings and will continue to be key resources in connecting workforce and education professionals with key businesses in targeted industry sectors. Commerce's regional economic development team will take a more active role in working with local workforce and education partners to implement regional sector strategies in key industries.

Provide Career Pathways for Economic Advancement

Throughout the sections on Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions, Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers and Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access, this plan describes partnerships to expand career pathway opportunities through accelerated programs and work-based training while aligning and integrating programs of study that lead to industry-recognized credentials. Priorities and strategies developed from this alignment will ensure career and work readiness at all levels. The engagement of educational institutions to create a job-driven education and training system will allow the state to make significant and strategic system improvements to address workforce development needs through flexible, responsive and progressive programs informed by labor market information. Initiatives will be rooted in labor market data that will inform education and workforce systems when establishing programs thereby allocating resources to in-demand occupations and away from those jobs that have declining opportunities due to changing economic conditions. Additionally, employment and wage data will facilitate the measurement of workforce outcomes of students to demonstrate performance and effectiveness of programs.

Provide Labor Market Information for Regional Planning

Commerce, Employment Security, ICCB and the Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) Interagency Data Team will continue to provide an analysis of economic and labor market information to the state and local economic development professionals. The Interagency Data Team will play an important coordinating role to foster better intra-regional communication (such as through WIOA regional planning) so that as many communities as possible within a region have a similar vision that can be used to leverage the efforts of all. The state and local economic development professionals play an important role in working with business to validate and refine the labor market information (LMI) based on the current needs of business in the region and

local areas. In 2019, the Interagency Data Team reviewed national best practices to improve data analysis and presentation used for data packets provided to WIOA regional planning teams to make LMI more accessible to a wider audience of stakeholders. Data packets are included as

Attachment O

<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20O%20-%20Regional%20Planning%20Data%202020.pdf>).

Expand Employer Access to Labor Market Information

The Interagency Data Team will develop new opportunities for employers to communicate their forecasted demand for workers and review and provide input into industry and occupational projections developed through Employment Security. This will include new tools for employers working together in leading regional partnerships to continuously communicate short-term forecasts of job openings and competency and credentialing requirements for these jobs. This will build the best practices from employer-led national and state initiatives, including the United States Chamber of Commerce Talent Pipeline Management Initiative. The team also will improve employer capacity to easily communicate career opportunities and current job openings to regional partnerships and their broader labor market in Illinois. This will be accomplished through employer tools that can be easily integrated with their current human resource information systems and their own websites that provide information on careers and job openings.

b. State Operating Systems and Policies

Illinois has a robust array of operating systems and policies in place to support the implementation of our strategies. Existing systems and policies evolved, and in some cases, new ones were implemented over the course of the PY16 – PY19 Unified State Plan period to support implementation of the strategies included in the plan. Examples include: enhanced cross-agency collaboration; improved business engagement; a wider range of service options, such as expanded use of apprenticeships, OJT and incumbent worker training; continued support of sector strategies; improved use of data for empirical decision-making and greater emphasis on shared support of American Job Center operations. Going forward, systems and policies will continue to evolve to address the updated strategies in this plan. The following sections provide more specific descriptions of how we intend to refine existing and implement new strategies for: improved cross-agency service integration; greater emphasis on data-driven program evaluation and continuous improvement; and ensuring equity of service delivery; among others.

III. b. 1. The State operating systems that will support the implementation of the State's strategies. This must include a description of–

A. State Operating Systems that Support Coordinated Implementation of State strategies (e.g., labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case-management systems, job banks, etc.)

Illinois' technology and operating systems are overseen by the Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT). This agency was established by Executive Order 01-16 on January 25, 2016. It established DoIT as a new state agency with the responsibility for the information technology functions of agencies under the jurisdiction of the Governor. As DoIT has responsibility for

information technology functions, the data strategy for Illinois is maintained by the DoIT's State Data Practice (SDP), and incorporates governance, data identification, security, ownership, quality and data sharing. In Illinois, the six core WIOA programs are divided among four core agencies and each agency is responsible for maintaining its own reporting system working with DoIT, however, DoIT is responsible for maintaining the data platform between agencies.

Illinois has taken action to bring together partner leadership and subject matter experts to examine existing systems, collaborate on potential interoperability solutions and take steps towards an integrated WIOA system in Illinois. DoIT workforce and economic strategists assembled a subject matter expert interagency team. This interagency team was comprised of data, technology, and performance specialists from the four core partner agencies: DCEO, IDES, ICCB, and DHS. The interagency team analyzed each of the core partner systems. Process maps were created for each of the major workflows. Upon conclusion of the workflow and process mapping exercises, the group concluded that:

- the systems in use were still viable and functional;
- each system was extremely robust and complex;
- each system contained data and programming not only for the WIOA Title but was also linked to other related agency programs; and
- the systems could be modified in a timely manner to meet the demands of WIOA implementation.

Upon analyzing the technology and programmatic structure, the best solution for Illinois is not the retirement of the existing systems, but rather the creation of an interface that could connect the systems. Following the aforementioned analysis, it was the recommendation of the Interagency Work Group to the state WIOA Technology Steering Committee that Illinois should create a general WIOA intake system that assigned a common participant WIOA ID number, conducted a general suitability and preliminary assessment and then referred the customer -- based on a centralized WIOA centralized services and eligibility logic -- to the partner(s) that would best be able to provide them services based upon the suitability criteria. The ID and basic demographic and suitability information would travel to each respective agency's existing database via an Application Programming Interface (API). The interface would also need to have a tracking and reporting function for WIOA clients in order to achieve the common exit requirement and WIOA common reporting requirement. The recommendation was taken under consideration by DoIT leadership and they met with various steering committee members to discuss alternatives.

In 2017, the IWIB established an Information Technology (IT) Standing Committee in order to support the IWIB's priorities. In 2019, due to a focusing of those priorities, the IT Committee was put on hiatus. However, the activities of the Committee (and its membership) will be subsumed into a revised IWIB Committee structure. One of these activities will be the coordination of IWIB strategies with the work of DoIT and the Interagency Leadership Team to ensure the alignment of technology and data systems across required partner programs in Illinois. During 2020 and beyond, the IWIB will provide leadership to ensure that this technology alignment process continues to move forward.

The following are the current Illinois WIOA systems in use. Each of these systems has been modified and updated within their respective agencies independently to meet the DOL/ DOE WIOA mandates pertinent to its respective Title. Illinois has successfully implemented and executed all WIOA requirements thus far.

WIOA Title IB – Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce)

WIOA Title IB is overseen by Commerce. The Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs case management system is known as the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS). The IWDS provides electronic storage of users, customers, applications, providers, services and grants for local workforce innovation areas (LWIAs). IWDS is designed to specifically address WIOA Title I policy, procedure and reporting requirements. It is integrated fully with the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program and Rapid Response Dislocated Worker Tracking and event assignment information. Key functional elements of IWDS are: 1) customer management and case notes; 2) application management that includes an imbedded logic to ensure WIOA policy compliance, particularly regarding assessment, eligibility and service assignment; 3) service providers, employers, training providers and training program information tied to participants and participant outcomes; 4) service tracking and outcomes; 5) performance management via selection from a reporting menu in which a viewer can print and save standard reports; 6) DOL PIRL and WIPS reporting system of record for WIOA Title I. IWDS contains shared data uploaded via secure batch file processes to display Illinois Employment Security UI profile data, UI wage data Trade Readjustment Allowances / Alternative Adjustment Assistance (TRA/ATTA) payments. IWDS also has access to Wage Record Information System (WRIS) data and the Illinois Department of Human Services allows access to SNAP/TANF data to facilitate eligibility assurance. IWDS has continued to be updated on a timely basis to accommodate all necessary WIOA assessment, eligibility, service and training changes, and performance and reporting outcomes deliverables to stay in compliance and meet deadlines.

WIOA Title II – Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)

The Adult Education and Literacy Act is administered through the ICCB. The Adult Education program uses a web-based system to collect data from 78 programs throughout the state. The DAISi (Data and Information System – Illinois) was developed to collect pertinent adult education data for Federal and State reporting. The system is available through a direct portal. The programs input student information, including demographics, assessment and testing, employment information, courses, funding, instructional activities & service and federal and state requirements, including information pertinent for federal National Reporting System (NRS) and WIOA reporting.

Programs must submit reports quarterly and can do this through the DAISi system. Detailed instructions for reporting are provided to all programs prior to these submissions. These instructions assist to identify and correct errors. The system is designed to exclude any student records that are not error-free and compliant with the error check mechanism within the system. Data staff know that failure to correct errors results in the loss of reporting of a student's activity and progress in the program. In addition, the system provides an error check mechanism that allows users to check for errors or system warnings on a regular basis. Programs are instructed to run this error check on a weekly basis, and the system has been designed to exclude students with errors from official reporting until the student records have been corrected. Program staff reviews student files through on-site

visits, and also use the system's state-level Desktop Monitoring Tool to review program data. The data system is designed to ensure required data elements are collected as a student's record is entered. All fields that are required are highlighted in red and if one of these fields is not completed, the system does not accept the record. Instead, the user is presented with an error message outlining what is missing in order for the record to be accepted. The front-end error checks also ensure that data is entered in a specific order to avoid missing data from the system.

The data system has a comprehensive error check to ensure that local programs are entering valid and accurate assessment information. When entering assessment information, users are guided through a series of fields and selected assessment information from drop-down menus. If a value is entered for a score that is outside the range of that particular assessment, the user receives an immediate prompt alerting to this error. For example, the student's NRS level, scale scores and point/level gains are calculated by the system and are not dependent upon the user indicating if a level gain has occurred. For students who receive several post-tests during the fiscal year, the system calculates final gains based only on the final assessment results in comparison with the first assessment given.

Programs are required to submit Performance and Status reports on a quarterly basis. Detailed quarterly reporting instructions are sent to the field to outline how to develop and run the report from the DAISi system and the submission process at each reporting period. Users also complete an end of the year verification process that allows them to review final data for the year.

ICCB maintains a DAISI listserv group of users to allow communication directly with those using the system. The ICCB also posts important announcements on the system's homepage where users arrive when logging into the system. Users can post questions on a discussion forum and view the questions of others. DAISI users also have access to a technical helpdesk through our grant contractor and assistance is provided by ICCB staff to handle all policy-related questions.

The ICCB is also the administrator for the Illinois High School Equivalency (HSE) program. The ICCB maintains a database of records at both the state and local levels, including Cook County. This system houses all the pertinent records of individuals who take approved exams instate. These exams are used to certify high school equivalency attainment. Currently, the exams include the GED, HiSET and TASC. The ICCB works with each vendor to upload data through a nightly feed into the system to ensure that timely and valid records are maintained. Error checks are embedded to ensure records are cross-matched and the names and other identifiable information is accurate. The system also maintains constitution results, which is a requirement in order to issue a High School Equivalency Certificate/Diploma. The HSE not only validates that an individual meets the requirements as established by the ICCB but also produces both official and non-official transcript information on each exam taken.

WIOA Title III – Illinois Department of Employment Security

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) continues to work to enhance the Labor Market Information (LMI) system to support the six WIOA strategies. Traditional LMI produced by Employment Security is readily available on the Employment Security website, the Virtual Labor Market Information (VLMI) system (a Geographic Solutions web tool which houses the Workforce Information Database per the requirements of the Workforce Information

Grant), and limited LMI through the IL Career Information System (wages and projections). Traditional LMI includes occupational wage information, current economic conditions by industry and geography, as well as short term and long-term Industry and Occupational Employment Projections by local area. Also included are the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (labor force data) and Current Employment Statistics (local area jobs data by industry). Near real-time LMI includes information on The Conference Board's Help Wanted Online Job Ads postings by Economic Development Region and can be customized upon request. Other real-time LMI utilizes information from the state's Unemployment Insurance and Employment Service programs.

The Illinois Benefit Information System (IBIS) is a web-based custom-developed application that administers the unemployment insurance benefits program for the State of Illinois. The benefits system provides 24/7 web access where individuals can file claims, certify for benefits and obtain payment information. Additional methods available to file claims and certifications include the Claimants filing their claims and their weekly benefits through a variety of methods: online, through an Interactive Voice Response System (Teleserve), over the telephone with a call center agent, or in person at one of the 36 locations throughout the state. The system IBIS keeps track of claims filed, certifications, correspondence, benefits investigations, payments, appeals, benefit charging, wage information and historical transactions. An integrated interface also exists between IBIS and Illinois JobLink, providing the opportunity for UI customers to transition to employment services immediately after filing a claim for benefits. Correspondence is received from both claimants and employers utilizing an electronic case folder. Adjudicatory hearings are scheduled and conducted via telephone. Payments are issued to eligible recipients via direct deposit or a debit card. In addition to administering regular Unemployment Insurance claims, IBIS also administers Trade Readjustment Allowance Act (TRA) for impacted worker; Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA); Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC); Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers (UCX) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE).

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) is the primary agency that administers Employment Services pursuant to Title III of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Through the one-stop delivery system, labor exchange services are delivered by utilizing IllinoisJobLink.com (the State of Illinois' mandated labor exchange system). IllinoisJobLink.com is a robust, dynamic and comprehensive web-based workforce development system that is available 24/7 for job seekers, employers, training providers and workforce professionals with real-time data and reports, for meeting and tracking federal performance goals across all programs for core partners. To date, all known WIOA requirements have been fully implemented in IllinoisJobLink.com for: Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker & Youth), Title II (Adult & Basic Education), Title III (Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange) and Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation).

Job seekers, employers, training providers and workforce professionals in Illinois use IllinoisJobLink.com for their labor exchange and case management needs. IllinoisJobLink.com is WIOA compliant and is updated every twelve to sixteen weeks to include all state and DOL mandates and requirements. Moreover, the reporting functionality allows Illinois to manage and produce Wagner/Peyser services and DOL PIRL performance reports. Illinois is a member of America's Job Link Alliance (AJLA), which is a consortium of states that use AJLA products and services. Currently, there are ten states (Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Delaware, Idaho, Illinois,

Kansas, Maine, Oklahoma and Vermont) using the AJLA products. Additionally, there are six states (Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Nevada and New Jersey) using AJLA's Reporting product. The value of membership allows Illinois to meet twice yearly with its counterparts from other states to share best practices and propose system enhancements that create better end-user experiences.

IllinoisJobLink.com is a robust, dynamic and comprehensive web-based workforce development system for job seekers, employers, training providers and workforce professionals with real-time data and reports, for meeting and tracking federal performance goals across all programs for core partners. To date, all known WIOA requirements have been fully implemented in IllinoisJobLink.com for: Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker & Youth), Title II (Adult & Basic Education), Title III (Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange) and Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation).

The Labor Exchange functionality in IllinoisJobLink.com enables the claimant to transition – seamlessly, and in real-time -- from filing an unemployment claim to start the journey back to gainful employment. The platform provides real-time, scalable, collaborative and integrated case management across programs, which allows the staff to focus on the job seeker and reduce the administrative overhead. Since IllinoisJobLink.com implementation in December 2011, we have trained all partners in all local workforce areas, and all partners have case-management access to the system.

WIOA Title IV – Illinois Department of Human Services

WIOA Title IV is administered by the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services. The Web Case Management System (WebCM) is the primary case management system for the Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program, providing electronic storage of customer case records, as well as links to other systems that display information related to case requirements. WebCM is an internet-based system that can be accessed from any location with appropriate security and was developed internally by DHS information systems staff. WebCM was developed to be in compliance with all WIOA requirements and mandated data reporting. Key elements include: customer management and case notes; case progression and record-keeping for intake, assessment, eligibility determination and service plan development; secure access for vendor agencies; report generation and service tracking; and online linkage to partner systems, including the wage verification system, Social Security system and the DHS integrated eligibility system.

The Integrated Eligibility System (IES) promotes service integration and improves how eligibility is determined for health and human services, education, employment training and placement activities, along with other viable services needed to improve economic stability. It offers specific features for customers to access and manage their own cases. Staff and WIOA partners are trained to assist customers in obtaining case information, as well as applying for benefits online without the hardship of physically coming into the local offices.

The Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Family & Community Services is the state administrator of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. TANF is a time-limited cash assistance program for low-income families. DHS operates Family Community Resource Centers (FCRC) statewide serving TANF customers on the pathway to self-sufficiency.

TANF customers are evaluated and assessed for suitability for inclusion in employment and training programs. TANF customers are also assessed to determine barriers and barrier reduction service needs. These issues may be related to substance abuse, mental health and domestic violence. The FCRC identifies the customer's needs to create a Responsibility and Service Plan (RSP), which is a guide to services. The RSP contains employment and training needs, supportive service needs (e.g., transportation and uniforms) and childcare. Most TANF customers are also eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and medical assistance.

The Division contracts with community-based organizations to provide either work experience or job placement for TANF Employment and Training customers. The Division provides oversight of programs statewide and the Division's goal is to cultivate more career pathway opportunities for our TANF customers.

The Department of Human Services' Division of Family & Community Services has a strong presence in Comprehensive One-Stop Centers and is committed to increasing workforce engagement with collaborative partnerships to achieve employment opportunities for all adults served by DHS. A taskforce has been created to strategically move through the process of ensuring service integration among Partners in the one-stop centers. Staff located in the Comprehensive One-Stop Centers is trained to assist customers utilizing the online TANF/SNAP/Medical application through the Application for Benefits Eligibility System (ABE), which is accessible through Illinois workNet. To streamline the referral process, DHS is actively involved in cross-training sessions at the one-stop centers to enhance awareness of services and resources provided on-site.

In addition to these systems, Illinois has additional platforms that reach across agencies and state boundaries to demonstrate new and innovative options for data-sharing and technology integrations.

- The Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) and the Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator (CDDA) mentioned in the original Unified State Plan are progressing well. The system has successfully matched demographic data among seven of Illinois' workforce and education agencies, and now has millions of Master Client Index IDs to bridge data across education, training, wages and employment. Technology, shared data agreements, research procedures and data-matching techniques can all be leveraged from ILDS practices and utilized to find solutions towards Illinois WIOA technology unification. The ILDS assists the WIOA state agencies, partners and the IWIB with research and in improving availability of intelligent and reliable combined program trends and outcomes that enable the state to make data-driven decisions.
- In 2019, the Illinois Department of Commerce was awarded a Round VII Workforce Data Quality Initiative Grant with which it intends to develop and implement the Pro Path Illinois platform. Pro Path Illinois is a statewide technological platform that can be utilized by both education and workforce partners throughout the state that integrates existing educational and workforce training provider and program data and allows for the ability of agile enhancement to that data. Pro Path Illinois builds on the existing state Educational P20W system, the ILDS, the CDDA, the IL Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI), and the IL Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) systems and partners to advance the state forward into the next generation of transparency and accessibility of educational and workforce

training information. Southern Illinois University-Carbondale's Center for Workforce Development (SIUC-CWD) will serve as the technical lead to standardize data formatting and schemas and integrate the combined data into a centralized relational database. This system will have the ability to be augmented in such a way as to capture any Training Provider Common Program Information (CPI) elements not covered through administrative datasets, as well as information from programs outside of the agencies' administrative ecosystems. Pro Path Illinois will also enable the State to combine CPI data with credential transparency data available through the [Credential Engine](#) project, whose lead technology partner is SIUC-CWD. Nationally standardized credential, quality assurance, competency and assessment data from Credential Engine can supplement the CPI data.

Illinois maintains several platforms for internal and external data sharing. DoIT is building ILDS 2.0, which will integrate employment, educational, human services and early childhood data from multiple agencies in a common repository. This platform will also allow for analysis of state programs and outcomes and support evidence-based policymaking.

1. Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) Center for Workforce Development (CWD) will support the design and development of the WDQI: ProPath Illinois Common Program Information System (PPI). The primary project tasks and deliverables include:
 - Coordination of grant activities with Commerce OET and other project team partners to meet project timeline requirements
 - Design and development of the PPI Phase I using agile methodology as a Minimum Viable Product (MPV) for credential information including:
 - i. Datastore solution
 - ii. Interfaces for publishing, augmenting, consuming, and displaying data
 - iii. Data quality requirements
 - iv. Integration with the state agency project partners and the I-ADRF

2. In addition to creating an interoperable training provider and program data directory, ProPath Illinois will establish a statewide Illinois-Administrative Data Research Facility (I-ADRF) that has the ability to extend data sharing outside Illinois borders. The I-ADRF is part of a national data research piloting initiative, the Administrative Data Research Facility (ADRF), which enables secure access to analytical tools, data storage and discovery services, and general computing resources for users to revolutionize evidence-based policymaking and comply with the Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act of 2016. I-ADRF is a FedRAMP-compliant, secure computing environment for approved analyses using agency administrative datasets. It currently consists of records from several State agencies – including Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) – and it resides within a broader ADRF ecosystem,

administered by New York University containing microdata from states around the Midwest. This ecosystem facilitates inter-state data linkage and thus the pursuit of research questions across broader geographies, as well as pertaining to particular sub-populations such as those receiving public assistance or returning citizens from the justice system. In 2020, IL will join an inter-state WIOA research collaboration team with multiple Midwest states such as Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan to develop the prototype for the first Regional WIOA Performance Data Research and Reporting Platform via the ADRF.

3. The Illinois workNet Portal platform launched in 2005 by the IWIB and sponsored by the Illinois Department of Commerce continues to evolve and adapt with new technologies and innovative initiatives. It connects individuals, employers, education & workforce professionals and community partners to career training and development resources and tools. Job seekers, businesses, non-profit organizations or state or local governmental entities seeking guidance can all utilize the portal as a resource. The site is 100 percent integrated with the DCEO IWDS system for WIOA Title I via an API. Illinois workNet has been utilized on multiple special state grants and pilot programs to host intake, assessment, referral, customer engagement and real-time performance dashboards and scorecards. Employment Opportunities, Personalized Services, Individualized Training and Career Planning program (EPIC), which was overseen by the Illinois Department of Human Services and focuses on expediting SNAP and TANF clients into WIOA training and career advancement proved to be a successful collaboration. Other integration prototypes that have utilized the IwN cloud-based technology and agile development platform and resources include Youth Career Pathways and Disability Employment Initiatives. During and throughout the implementation of WIOA, Illinois workNet has been able to host collaborative workspaces for WIOA planning and implementation efforts. It has also provided the staffing and platform to further improve upon the online WIOA ePolicy site and host webinars to involve and inform state stakeholders. This state asset has continued to be a collaborative portal in which the state workforce and educational institutions can engage and explore new ways to combine efforts and data to create a seamless experience for the customer. The next generation of innovative and integrative intake, client management, resource tracking, services and performance outcomes measurement is currently under development and will be launched in 2020 with the Apprenticeship Expansion project. The IwN next generation integration system will include the ability to access a full-service menu of intuitive system screen design that provides: intake, eligibility, assessment, referral, application, service assignment, goal achievement, certifications, completions, exits, follow-up, and includes a robust customer tracking and performance/reporting application. Built on the previous platform's design work and lessons learned, this platform is being developed initially for apprenticeship, but it will have the ability to append and include additional programs. The system also allows for alternative integration and partial integration features, such as bulk upload or API upload of front-end customer data that can then flow through the case management processes and performance reporting application. Or for those establishments that already have established systems, it allows for bulk upload or API on the performance application to ensure full accountability of program performance and data transparency.

- In addition to the program intake and case management development in Illinois workNet state workforce partners collaborated to build a State public platform on Illinois workNet that specifically targets and services Illinois businesses. The Illinois Business Hub or “BizHub” led by Department of Commerce in collaboration with other state business and education agencies, local workforce areas, and the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) created the Business Hub on the Illinois workNet website. The purpose of the Business Hub is to provide a landing area for employers that links to information and tools focused on serving businesses. The site is in a centralized location for employer-related content with the goal of increasing informational flow and coordination between employers and state and local partners. Efforts are ongoing to include continuous improvement efforts on this site to increase sharing or business information to better serve partners and businesses. The site had a soft launch at the Governor’s Summit in October 2018. The site is accessible with this URL: <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/bizhub>.
- Commerce is in the final development of the new integrated business engagement and layoff intake and tracking platform that will also include economic landscape dashboards and predictive analytic statistics that will facilitate business analysts and layoff specialist throughout the state to track layoffs and make more informed and proactive decisions to avert layoffs. Illinois Employment Business System (IEBS) is a cloud-based agile software platform. The ultimate goal of IEBS is to provide quality workforce information and layoff tracking data from multiple reliable sources that is easy to access, easy to understand, and easy to retain and extract in order to make data-driven decisions that facilitate state efforts for layoff aversion and promote economic and workforce advancement in Illinois. Built-in responsive design, IEBS will empower users to have the business intelligence they need via smartphone, tablet or laptop to quickly search the economic landscape of Illinois utilizing real-time D&B global business data, IL Dept. of Employment Security LMI data, and State and local workforce layoff tracking data. Providing government workforce and economic advocates with critical transparent business intelligence via on-the-fly dashboards, analytic tools, and industry cluster SWOT information will facilitate informed strategic decision making and result in the ability for State leadership to formulate evidence-based policymaking. In addition, the Interagency Data Team reviewed national best practices to improve data analysis and presentation used in this plan and also data packets provided to WIOA regional planning teams to make LMI more accessible to a wider audience of stakeholders.

B. Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in one-stop centers

The Illinois core partners have long-standing data sharing agreements in place whereby the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce), Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) request data matching of the Unemployment Insurance Wage Record Data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security). WIOA has motivated the agencies to look closely at the long-term agreements and determine if changes need to be made to accommodate

new and innovative methods of sharing data between the agencies. The agreements facilitate cross-program access to data about common participants while minimizing duplicative systems costs.

In addition to one-on-one data access, the ILDS continues to use two intergovernmental agreements (IGA) to support inter-agency data governance and sharing. Executed in 2013, an IGA established the governance structure of the ILDS, which now includes eight state agency signatories including the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), ICCB, DCEO, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), IDES, DHS, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), as well as the Office of the Governor.

A second ILDS IGA established the role of the CDDA and its inter-agency identity resolution-related work. This IGA supports the establishment of a master client index identifier for all clients and facilitates integrated and streamlined service delivery, common reporting and measurement of interagency longitudinal performance outcomes as required under WIOA Section 116(d)(2). The eight aforementioned agencies, as well as the Office of the Governor and Northern Illinois University (NIU), are parties to this agreement.

Regarding specific inter-agency research projects, the ILDS has established a standardized data sharing agreement template that aligns legal terms and conditions and security protocols across the eight participating agencies. All prospective ILDS data requestors and users are required to agree to these terms and conditions, with the ability to suggest supplemental legal language via addendum as necessary. The template also includes exhibits describing project scope and reporting. The template has been used for several inter-agency projects in the education and workforce data space.

Since the submittal of the Unified State Plan in 2016, the Office of the Governor established the Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) to “lead digital transformation within the state and increase interagency efficiency and improve delivery of services to residents and businesses.” The Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) drafted an inter-agency eMOU to promote data-sharing among state agencies in late 2016. This agreement has been signed by 22 agencies to date, including the core partners. The eMOU agreement established an operational committee that facilitates data-sharing requests among the agency partners. The committee is comprised of the State’s Chief Data Officer and Chief Information Officers from signatory agencies. The State of Illinois created and signed this agreement within only seven months due to strong support from the Office of the Governor, DoIT executive leadership and agency directors. This agreement was instrumental in Illinois’ IT transformation.

The Illinois Governor’s Office is actively assisting the core partners in technology interoperability solutions. Assessments of current systems have begun, and additional research and analysis will be necessary. Further discovery is needed, and attention made to mold the technology plan with the state WIOA plan so that policy drives state technology. This action will ensure long-term success and sustainability of a WIOA Unified State Plan and workforce system.

Although Illinois does not currently have a fully integrated data system, it is nevertheless committed to pursuing alignment and integration of participant and performance data across core programs with the ultimate goal of providing effective and efficient services that lead to the participants’ employment as quickly as possible. The Interagency Leadership Team is currently working with the

Governor's Office and DoIT leadership to discuss and explore data integration concepts. Core program partner representatives identified existing gaps between the data collected historically and the data collection requirements under WIOA. Core partners have been working to address those gaps through the following actions:

- Core partners have adjusted their own data systems in response to performance accountability requirements under WIOA. Partners have identified data collection methods and standards that are best practices in some core program partners and could be explored for use by other core program partners (e.g., how to account for participants who lack a Social Security number when reporting performance outcomes);
- Core partners have reviewed potential platforms for developing a common framework for use by all required partners under WIOA;
- Core partners have developed prototype dashboards for core program partners to track individual and aggregate performance data across core programs;
- Core partners have researched mechanisms for facilitating smart referrals, and allowing core program partners to share information directly with each other's systems; and
- Core partners have addressed Federal guidance on performance and reporting as it became available and did system modifications to comply with the regulations;
- Core partners have analyzed measurable skills gains for assessing participant skills and the time period over which skills gains are to be measured; and
- Core partners established the methodology for effectiveness of serving employers as 1) Retention with the same employer, and 2) Employer Penetration Rate.

Illinois will continue to use existing web-based interfaces that integrate data via API tools. Real-time access to workforce development resources for individuals, businesses and workforce professionals is available and is shareable and viewable in user-friendly dashboards for better customer service. Ongoing discussions include how to further integrate the Internet-based data systems to enhance program alignment and service delivery.

In addition to other state efforts for collaboration and integration, it should also be noted that Illinois has entered into full commitment and execution of the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) with ETA. Under the previous Wage Rate Interchange System (WRIS) and WRIS 2 agreements, IL Department of Employment Security was considered a State unemployment insurance Agency (SUIA) and a Performance Accountability and Customer Information Agency (PACIA). The IL Dept. of Commerce and Economic Opportunity was a PACIA. Under the new SWIS agreement, the IL Community College Board and the IL Dept. of Human Services Vocational Rehabilitation have been added as PACIAs also. This will give both the education and workforce partners access to the ETA clearinghouse of wage data to improve reporting of participant and student outcomes data.

III. b. 2. State of Illinois Policies

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), has charged IWIB policy workgroups with developing for adoption several new and revised policies to assist in implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). These policies provide guidance for state agency partners and service providers in such areas as:

- General transition to and implementation of WIOA
- Designation of Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs)
- Chief Elected Official (CEO) agreements and functions
- Local workforce board composition and certification
- Eligibility for youth, dislocated worker and adult populations
- Eligible training providers and their programs
- Certification of One-Stop Centers
- Minimum Training Expenditures
- One-Stop Operator Procurement
- Service Integration
- Designation of Centers within Illinois' One-Stop System

The IWIB continues to utilize a highly collaborative policy development process to address policies with system-wide implications, such as one-stop certification and service integration. Due to the far-reaching impact of such policies, it is important that a broad cross-section of workforce stakeholders be involved in policy development. As a result, a process has been established that involves consultation among State and local Board members, chief elected officials, WIOA partners, employers and other stakeholders in crafting policy that provides cost-effective and efficient guidance to the field. Gathering input from all stakeholders ensures continuity and consistency among the programs throughout the state.

An important policy work group that has been launched under this policy development process is the IWIB Service Integration Work Group. As a foundational element of Illinois' Unified State Plan and the IWIB's Strategic Plan modifications, being developed in 2019-2020 for implementation in 2020, service integration is a way to link and leverage scarce resources and improve customer outcomes. This policy work group focused on using service integration to help "optimize the effectiveness of the one-stop system for all customers" -- one of the five objectives of the IWIB's Strategic Plan. The content of the policy was shaped over a 16-month period by the IWIB's 29-member Service Integration Policy Work Group representing IWIB members, local workforce areas personnel, State-level WIOA partners, and other workforce stakeholders. The policy describes seven service integration functions, each having a corresponding outcome and one or more associated goals. The Service Integration Policy Work Group adopted a model of service integration that moves through five stages: isolation, communication, coordination, collaboration and integration. The work group organized into committees to develop clear standards of what each stage of integration looks like across the core functions of one-stop centers. These functions include customer-centered design, staff, intake and assessment, services, career pathways, information, and evaluation. Taken together, the goals and outcomes for these functions represent a long-term, high-level vision for one-stop service integration in Illinois. Operationalizing these goals will occur locally through the WIOA planning, one-stop certification, and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) negotiation processes.

The Service Integration Policy Work Group is modeling how to leverage resources by utilizing the Illinois Department of Human Services Rehabilitation Services Technical Assistance Grant received from the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center, known as WINTAC. WINTAC is funded by the United States Department of Education. A key focus of WINTAC Activity is on service

integration. Through WINTAC, the model is using the five stages and seven core functions for service integration. Three sub-workgroups formed around the seven core functions will be exploring policy and practice best practices to put in place to achieve service integration.

The first sub-workgroup explored the development of a self-assessment tool that enables each local one-stop system to evaluate its level of integration across all seven core functions and use those results to develop an improvement plan. With WINTAC's permission, the project team developed the self-assessment tool based on their Service Integration Facilitator's Guide. Several of WINTAC's function areas overlapped with the goals of Illinois' service integration policy and other areas had to be developed by the team. The guide also outlines a process and related materials for convening one-stop partners to collaborate on the assessment.

The second sub-workgroup was tasked with integrating the goals and outcomes of service integration into the one-stop certification application when they were directly tied to a one-stop center versus the one-stop system as a whole. The group has conducted a detailed review of the original certification application and has identified a number of needed changes to strengthen its service integration requirements. Updates to the one-stop certification application are being finalized and will be used to certify centers in the future.

The final sub-workgroup was charged to recommend an evaluation approach/high-level design for the IWIB's Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) that describes how outcomes of the new service integration policy will be measured, what information will be needed to assess and document outcomes, and a timeline. Technical assistance needs associated with local evaluation efforts also will be identified. The CIC will evaluate the policy to determine if it is being implemented as envisioned.

As part of policy development, guidance and technical assistance, Illinois continues to utilize an ePolicy manual (<https://apps.il-work-net.com/WIOAPolicy/Policy/Home>) on the Illinois workNet portal. This ePolicy manual contains policy, procedures, related documents and resources to support the LWIB in implementation and provision of service under WIOA. The manual organizes policy into logical categories (chapters) starting at the statewide system level and narrowing into guidance directly related to WIOA Title IB. This portal was reviewed by other states and is being adopted and adapted by at least one state under the direction of workNet staff. Additionally, to assist with service integration efforts, the portal houses a technical assistance site that deals specifically with service integration <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Pages/Service-Integration.aspx>.

The following are policies developed and issued through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) Office of Employment and Training (OET) in consultation with the Interagency Technical Assistance Team:

The IWIB continues to utilize the approved new procedures for communications between the State Board, its Executive Committee and the Interagency Technical Assistance Team – especially as they pertain to the continued implementation of WIOA and policies issued by the board, and begin to implement provisions of the IWIB Strategic Plan. It also provides guidance and instructions regarding: 1) regional and local planning requirements, 2) Governor's Guidelines to State and Local Program Partners Negotiating Costs and Services under WIOA, and 3) Criteria and Procedures for

Certifying Comprehensive One-Stop Centers under WIOA. This guidance provided a framework for program activities.

The IWIB will be discussing the policy process to identify any needed revisions. The CIC developed an implementation plan for evaluating policies that has been incorporated within initial draft changes, and further implementation steps may be incorporated, as necessary.

- Under a work group structure, Illinois developed policies to address the types of training services allowed under WIOA. The first of these training options was on-the-job training (OJT), for which policy was issued in 2016. General requirements for all OJTs outline the guidance for potential new employees or eligible underemployed workers. These requirements stipulate the acquisition of new skills or knowledge essential to job performance. To ensure proper implementation, LWIBs are required to set policy for OJTs. Monitoring and evaluation guidance assure further accountability.
- Guidance was issued to provide the workforce system with an overview of the steps Commerce has taken to implement the provisions of WIOA. This ensured a seamless transition for customers during intake and the continued provision of career and training services, including the expanded training services described in WIOA. This guidance also addressed reporting requirements during and after the transition period as changes to the workforce data reporting system were being made.
- Membership, certification, and subsequent certifications of LWIBs under WIOA is governed under policies that are consistent with the new provisions - including the assurance of more streamlined boards with a majority of business members, and minimum percentage of labor and community service organizations represented. Emphasis was placed on ensuring that business representatives reflect regional industry sectors and the diversity of the population. Pursuant of an online portal for tracking LWIB composition and compliance will occur over the next several years.
- Policy was implemented to address CEOs in each local area, including an understanding of their required functions as confirmed through a CEO agreement. The agreement addresses those LWIBs that have multiple CEOs. CEOs are given authority, as the local grant recipient, to designate local grant subrecipients and fiscal agents for the Title IB funds of WIOA. It also defines each CEO's liability for WIOA funds determined to have been misspent or used for unallowable purposes.
- Eligibility policies have been written to ensure that all the requirements of WIOA are clearly outlined for the LWIBs and their staff that delivers intake and registration services to customers. All customers of the system, whether served by local one-stop staff, through technology or self-served, are included in the general eligibility policy. Those seeking more than self-service assistance are determined eligible based on the funding stream under which they will be served. Detailed descriptions of the eligibility requirements and allowable documentation sources to confirm such eligibility decisions provide guidance to career planners in their decision-making. Priority of service is emphasized throughout to all population identified as priority of service within WIOA taking into account preference to veterans. A stand-alone priority of service policy will be created as equity goals discussed earlier in the plan are developed.

- WIOA policy has been issued to provide guidance to all training providers (including new providers, those that previously provided transitional eligibility, and the LWIBs and LWIAs) regarding the process for determining eligibility of providers and training programs. The policy covers initial and continued eligibility of all providers, with separate guidance for those Registered Apprenticeships choosing to be added to the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). This list highlights those programs that meet the state’s requirements for in-demand occupations. The current procedures are under review by a work group that will address the performance collection requirements for all students, streamline the current approval process for eligibility, and make suggestions for changes to the reporting system. This work group will also incorporate career pathways into the discussions and process of eligibility determination by local workforce innovation boards. The work group will explore development of new metrics to identify high demand jobs within Illinois. This list will replace the current demand occupation training list and incorporate the most recent data available on average annual job openings and wages, along with any additional data points identified by the work group.
- Over two years, the IWIB reviewed current policy on the requirement that local boards expend a minimum of forty percent (40%) of their Title IB Adult and Dislocated Worker funds on direct training costs. During this period of time, the board revised the formula to be calculated as a single expenditure rate rather than separate calculations. This was due in part because of the ability of boards to shift as much as 100% of these funds between the two programs, although Illinois has implemented a 50% maximum without prior approval. Through a policy work group, the allowable activities and direct training that can be considered calculable was revised to ensure it reflects the WIOA emphasis on registered apprenticeships and other new training opportunities. Finally, in September 2017, the board chose to increase the expenditure rate to fifty percent (50%) beginning with Program Year 2018 and institute a hold-harmless clause that would allow certain performance incentives to be awarded if a local board could justify its failure to meet the minimum rate. Additional revisions to the definition of direct training expenditures were made to include certain leverage resources such as through grants supported by Statewide Activities funding. In late 2019, the work group was deactivated as the only remaining area for further consideration was an effective evaluation of the policy. This activity will be managed under the priorities of the Continuous Improvement Committee.
- Policy issued in 2017 provided guidance on the process for selecting, certifying and designating one-stop operators in each of the twenty-two workforce areas through a competitive procurement process. Following further guidance by USDOL, this policy was further revised to address the information published in a Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL). Key elements related to the Federal Uniform Guidance to be followed in the process, components of a formal procurement process, essential contract elements, and conflicts of interest.

Governor’s Guidelines for Negotiating Infrastructure and Other Shared Costs

The State of Illinois has established the “Governor’s Guidelines to State and Local Program Partners for Negotiating Costs and Services under WIOA” to fulfill the WIOA requirement that the Governor issue guidance to state and local partners for negotiating cost-sharing (including determining

equitable and stable methods for all required partners to contribute to funding infrastructure costs in accordance with WIOA Section 121(h)(1)(B)), service access, service delivery, and other matters essential to the establishment of effective local workforce development services under WIOA (§678.705). The Governor's Guidelines address negotiation of local Memorandums of Understanding (MOU), negotiation of infrastructure costs, negotiation of local one-stop delivery system costs, timelines for negotiation of MOUs and infrastructure costs, reporting of interim and final negotiation outcomes and appeals processes and reconciliation. The state expects all required and optional partners to adhere to these guidelines. LWIBs and CEOs are to act in accordance with the guidelines and to otherwise comply with them. The scope of the Governor's Guidelines includes:

- General guidance, direction and requirements for negotiating local MOUs that are required in each LWIA to support the operation of the local one-stop delivery system.
- Guidance related to comprehensive one-stop center infrastructure costs, including guidance for budgeting, allocation, negotiation and reconciliation of these costs using the two funding methods WIOA prescribes.
- Guidance for identifying and negotiating local one-stop delivery system costs that will be shared among required partners.
- Timelines for local negotiation of MOUs and for reporting of the outcomes of these negotiations.
- Guidance related to requirements for reconciling budgeted shared costs to actual shared costs at least semi-annually, as well as new guidance regarding circumstances that require a formal budget amendment.
- Requirements for the process through which required partners can appeal decisions made in the application of these guidelines if the state infrastructure cost funding mechanism is used.
- Guidance for local boards wishing to request a waiver of any provision of the Governor's Guidelines.

Additionally, the Governor's guidelines include service matrices for career services and other programs and activities, demonstrating how career services and other programs are available through the local Comprehensive One-Stop Centers by required partners. To provide uniformity across the LWIAs, an MOU template is included in the Governor's Guidelines. This template provides the structure and elements of the MOU, providing placeholders for each LWIA to add their respective content. The Governor's Guidelines are included as Attachment J (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/DownloadPrint/Governor's%20Guidelines%20-%20Revision%204%20-%20Final.pdf>) and have been revised annually to incorporate the final WIOA regulations, subsequent guidance and submission timelines.

Evaluation & Benchmarks

To determine whether the Illinois WIOA Unified State Plan and other WIOA requirements are being carried out effectively, and to identify continuous improvement opportunities in the effectiveness and efficiency of Illinois' workforce development system and related policy, the IWIB created a Continuous Improvement Committee. This IWIB standing committee consists of six IWIB members and is supported by the IWIB Staff with technical and logistical support from Illinois university partners. Specific responsibilities of this Committee are under discussion and will include

recommending tools, measures, benchmarks and strategies. This committee will also serve as a resource to policymakers and other IWIB committees in establishing standards and metrics to assess and continuously improve system and program performance.

III. b. 3. State Program and State Board Overview

A. State Agency Organization

Organizational charts for each of the core partners are available as Attachment T at:

<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20T%20-%20Combined%20Organization%20Charts%202020.pdf>

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) is the state agency that leads economic development efforts for Illinois. Its mission is to support and maintain a climate that enables a strong economy for taxpayers, businesses, workers and communities by keeping, attracting and growing businesses, maintaining a skilled workforce, and enhancing communities so that the climate here is one in which businesses (small and large) and workers can succeed to the greatest extent possible. A primary focus is to retain and create jobs in Illinois by assisting:

- Existing businesses, encouraging them to reinvest and create more jobs for Illinois citizens;
- New businesses, inviting them to relocate, invest and create new jobs;
- International companies, positioning Illinois as a global business destination for Foreign Direct Investment;
- Entrepreneurs and investors, connecting resources to support their startups and ventures; and
- Locally and globally, promoting Illinois as a world-class tourism and film destination.

Commerce works with businesses, local governments and community organizations to advance economic development and improve the state's competitiveness in the global economy. Commerce is organized into the following offices that are focused on economic growth for the State of Illinois:

- **Business Development:** Administers job creation/retention grants, loans and tax credit programs;
- **Community Assistance:** helps low-income households in Illinois maintain utility services and reduce energy costs through improved energy efficiency, and helps individuals and families move toward stabilization;
- **Community Development:** Utilizes federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding to administer community infrastructure, housing and disaster recovery funding programs;
- **Employment and Training:** Oversees statewide workforce training system and promotes and coordinates initiatives to bridge skills gaps;

- Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology: Catalyzes local, national and global partnerships including the Small Business Development Center network and the Advantage Illinois program that strengthen Illinois' competitive advantage;
- Film: Promotes the state's film and theatre industry through tax incentives, including the Illinois Film Tax Credit;
- Minority Economic Empowerment: promote opportunities for all minority communities across the state through targeted programs, resources and advocates. The goal is to ensure minority enterprises have an equal opportunity to contribute to the growth of the Illinois economy;
- Regional Economic Development: Integrates economic development activities and outreach across the state, connecting communities and businesses to programs and assistance;
- Tourism: Markets state travel opportunities domestically and internationally, contributing to over \$2 billion in state and local tax revenues annually;
- Trade and Investment: Promotes Illinois' economy through outreach events and trade missions, and provides financial and technical exporting assistance to Illinois companies; and
- Urban Assistance: Manages the Urban Weatherization Initiative, targeting homes in disadvantaged communities and training home energy technicians, and the Employment Opportunities Grant program, which trains participants in the construction trade industry.

Office of Employment and Training

Supporting innovative workforce programs that connect employers to a highly skilled workforce is central to Illinois' commitment to ensure that businesses and communities thrive in Illinois. The Office of Employment and Training (OET) administers the WIOA Title IB Programs, WIOA statewide activities including rapid response and the training component of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act Program. Key units of the OET include: Planning, Policy, Performance, Monitoring, Reporting, Rapid Response and Trade, Technical Assistance and staff support to state workforce board activities.

Coordination with Economic Development

Commerce is responsible for ensuring that economic development activities are integrated with the workforce strategies outlined in II.c.1. Over the last decade, there has been a purposeful move to integrate economic and workforce development services at the state, regional and local levels. At the state level, Commerce's Business Development, Regional Economic Development Offices and the Office of Employment and Training collaborate to respond to the needs of business and industry in Illinois. This collaboration has accelerated over the last year under the leadership of the Governor and Commerce Director. There have been multiple informational briefings between offices and a marked increase in the use of cross-cutting teams to bring additional perspective and resources to bear on efforts of business retention, layoff aversion and business expansion. Establishing, maintaining and expanding these relationships is critical to the successful implementation of workforce strategies and activities.

Coordination with Community Development

Commerce's Office of Community Assistance oversees the employment and training programs under the Community Services Block Grant Program funding. The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program provides federal funding to Illinois' 36 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to carry out locally designed programs providing a range of services and activities that have measurable impacts on the causes and effects of poverty. The CSBG program assists low-income populations with transportation, clothing, health services, food, shelter and programs designed to increase self-sufficiency, such as job preparedness, education and housing assistance. Small business loans are also available with CSBG funding. Commerce will use the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) state, regional and local planning process to better align and integrate this program into the workforce and education system to strengthen Illinois' communities.

Guaranteeing Accessibility

The Department's Office of Equal Opportunity (EO) Monitoring and Compliance is responsible for monitoring program and physical accessibility issues for WIOA-funded activities supported by the Office of Employment and Training, all its grantees including LWIAs, and one-stop centers across the state. In 2018, the EO offices in the Departments of Commerce and Employment Security developed an agreement to better manage the ADA monitoring process of American Job Centers. This agreement allows for better coordination of office inspection timing and for improved cross-agency communication regarding inspection findings. In addition, both offices agreed to use the same inspection checklist to promote cross-agency integration of effort.

In facilities with both Title IB and Title III staff, Commerce conducts the ADA inspections to avoid duplication of services and better align findings and related reports. Commerce provides Employment Security with the ADA inspection report after the inspection has been completed. If Employment Security is the leaseholder, Employment Security will then work with the Illinois Department of Central Management Services, which oversees all leases in state agencies reporting to the Governor, and/or the landlord to correct any findings. This agreement between agencies is a tangible example of WIOA service integration that increases efficiency and effectiveness of each department's EO staff and helps ensure that all individuals have access to WIOA services.

Illinois Talent Pipeline Program

The Illinois Talent Pipeline Program develops strategies to train workers who can contribute to the growth and success of companies. Projects funded under this program are intended to develop sustainable work-based learning programs that will help Illinois companies retain and train current workers and hire new staff. The goal of a talent pipeline grant is to maintain a steady supply of hireable talent for the employer being served. Applications must address one or more of these Illinois Talent Pipeline activities to be considered for funding:

- Projects that connect talent strategies with business needs;
- Layoff aversion projects that support businesses and workers that are impacted or at risk of being impacted by company closures or layoffs; or

- Projects that expand work-based learning opportunities including apprenticeships for targeted populations.

Youth Career Pathways Program

The Youth Career Pathways Program provides grants for projects that address priorities identified in the WIOA Unified State Plan and that also incorporate practices that align with the statewide-adopted definition for a career pathway framework. Proposals must serve opportunity youth that face barriers to continued education and employment. Additionally, successful pilot projects will integrate workforce, education and economic development services and break down barriers to accessing job-driven training, resulting in employment opportunities. These projects will inform a framework for the development of sustainable career pathways for young people throughout the state. Additionally, they will assist in the effective and efficient implementation of WIOA regulations within Illinois' economic development regions.

Illinois Community College Board

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is responsible for the coordination of the Illinois Community College System, made up of 48 public community colleges in 39 districts. ICCB also administers the postsecondary Perkins/CTE (WIOA required partner) and Adult Education and Family Literacy (WIOA core partner Title II).

Title II of WIOA is funded through the United States Department of Education Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) and is administered by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). Title II of WIOA reauthorizes and enhances the Adult Education & Literacy Act (AELA). The purpose of Title II is to:

- Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency;
- Assist adults who are parents to obtain the educational skills that are necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children; and lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their families;
- Assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to post-secondary education and training, through career pathways; and
- Assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in improving their reading, writing, speaking and comprehension skills in English, mathematics skills, and acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom and the responsibilities of citizenship.
- The ICCB recognizes that the core purpose of Adult Education is to prepare individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in post-secondary education and the workforce. The eligible population to be served under Title II include individuals who have attained 16 years of age; who
- Are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law; and

- Are basic skills deficient; do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or are English language learners.

Illinois Department of Employment Security

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) is responsible for administering the Wagner-Peyser Program, Title III of WIOA. The intent of the Wagner-Peyser Program is to sustain economic growth by meeting the needs of job seekers, increasing awareness of resource providers, and expanding employment opportunities. Each Employment Security location provides employment services to all populations. Employment Security collaborates with our local workforce partners, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, local/state representatives, educational institutions and other organizations to assist job seekers in finding employment and helping employers find qualified workers. Employment Security offers job placement, individual employment assessments, an online job application process and job search and placement services. Employment Service representatives are charged with increasing community awareness about Employment Security programs via job fairs, resource events, community collaborations, onsite recruitments, resource linkage and presentations. Through outreach services, Employment Service staff are able to connect to those that do not come into our office for services. Representatives are also charged with creating relationships with local leaders to ensure they are aware of Employment Security programs and are able to collaborate with all activities to promote community awareness, use of resources and employment opportunities.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)

Title III Employment Services staff, in collaboration with Unemployment Insurance (UI) staff, conduct Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments for UI claimants identified as most likely to exhaust their benefits. Claimants required to complete this program attend a group workshop as well as one-on-one sessions with Employment Services staff to develop an Individual Reemployment Plan (IRP). During the individual assessment process participants, together with Employment Services staff, review their Illinois Job Link (IJL) registration and resume, identify additional workshops that may be beneficial, review Labor Market Information, and discuss referrals to other workforce partner programs that may be useful in their reemployment efforts. Workforce partners are encouraged to attend RESEA workshops to explain program services that may be available to the RESEA participants.

Economic Information and Analysis Division (EI&A)

Employment Security is the preeminent source for labor market and career information in Illinois. Employment Security has cooperative agreements with the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (USBLS) to provide statewide and sub-state employment, unemployment, occupation and wage information. In addition, Employment Security has a cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration to produce and maintain two-year and ten-year statewide and ten-year sub-state industry and occupational employment projections. These data products serve as the cornerstone for the Career Information System, a web-based tool for students and job seekers to identify Illinois in-demand jobs and make informed choices about future career pathways.

EI&A also offers consultation services and products on workforce outcomes to state agencies, training providers and universities. EI&A economists are singularly trained on workforce outcome metrics based on longstanding cooperative working relationships with the United States Census Longitudinal Employment Dynamics Division, USBLS, and DOL's Employment and Training Administration.

Division of Business Services

The Employment Security Business Services Division delivers professional employer engagement, with a focus on servicing our veteran community. This team is comprised of Business Service Managers, Business Service Coordinators, Veteran Program Representatives and special program advocates. Each serves collectively to deliver services and programs to the business and job seeker community. Employer engagement throughout Illinois is accomplished through personal business relationships with chambers of commerce, industry associations, economic groups and community-based organizations. Employer workshops are held, highlighting topics such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC)/State Tax Credits, Federal Fidelity Bonding Program and Apprenticeship programs. In addition to daily employer interactions, Employment Security provides training on Illinois Job Link (IJL), which is the data platform that assists employers in meeting their job candidate needs.

Employment Security business outreach staff participates in local and regional workforce integrated business engagement planning meetings throughout the state. Employment Security business engagement staff, both at the regional and local levels, participate in partner mapping of service processes, cross-agency training of programs and services, defining and utilizing processes applicable to sector strategy approaches, determining points of contact, responsible parties and actionable item deliverables that result from business engagement, use of available data collection tools to prepare business-centric analytical presentations, and the development of protocols for follow-up, tracking and accountability in regard to WIOA DOL performance metrics.

Opportunities for Individuals with Barriers to Employment

Wagner-Peyser Employment Services staff conduct workshops that target the needs of customers that may have a difficult time finding employment. Topics for the workshops include how to perform an effective job search, resume writing and cover letters, interviewing skills, labor market and career choice tools, and tips on how to use IllinoisJobLink.com (IJL), as well as the Career Information System (CIS). Specialized workshops are held for veterans, youth and ex-offenders. Employment Security promotes employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and encourages employers to hire these individuals for job openings. Employment Security hosts and participates in hiring events and workshops across the state for individuals with disabilities in coordination with Central Management Services (a State agency) and the Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), presenting information about employment opportunities in state government and the Successful Disability Opportunities Program.

Reentry Employment Service Program

To better serve the employment needs of returning citizens and in response to the sharply increasing number of returning citizen job seekers in Illinois, Employment Security facilitates a statewide

Reentry Employment Service Program (RESP). This program is for adults or juveniles who are or have been subject to any stage of the criminal justice process and who require assistance in overcoming barriers to employment resulting from a record of arrest or conviction. The RESP provides one-on-one job readiness assessments through its state labor exchange program, conducts workshops, makes appropriate referrals for supportive services, matches qualified job seekers with employer needs and encourages job retention.

Migrant & Seasonal Farmworkers Program

The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Program is a statewide program that assists migrant farmworkers, food processors and seasonal workers with workforce development services, career guidance, referral to training, advocates for appropriate working conditions and referrals to supportive services. States have a responsibility under Wagner-Peyser regulations to provide services to MSFWs on a basis that is qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate to services provided to non-MSFWs.

Hire the Future Program

The Hire the Future (HTF) program encourages youth age 16-24 years old to aspire to careers in professional and growth-oriented occupations. It provides employment services to youth and introduces them to career opportunities.

Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services

The Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is the designated state agency for administration of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program in Illinois. The main focus of the Department is to assist individuals with significant disabilities to obtain and retain competitive integrated employment. VR services are designed to prepare an individual for employment through an individualized planning process. Key VR services include:

- Job Placement - DRS VR counselors work with customers to identify job opportunities in the community, develop a resume and prepare for interviews. Other customers receive more intensive job placement and preparation services through community rehabilitation program agencies under contract to DRS.
- On-the-Job Training and Evaluations - Many VR customers receive on-the-job training and evaluation services arranged by DRS counselors in conjunction with local employers. These services provide an opportunity to demonstrate job skills and learn the requirements of a specific job.
- College and University Training - DRS assists many customers in pursuing a degree at a community college or at a university, based on the needs and abilities of the individual. Each year DRS assists about 3,500 individuals in attending college training.
- Treatment and Restoration Services - VR funds may be used to purchase medical, surgical, or psychological services, as well as other therapeutic services, to help customers achieve greater functioning and reduce barriers to employment.

- Supported Employment - Individuals with most significant disabilities often require a high level of support, both in preparation and on-the-job assistance, in order to achieve and maintain employment. Supported employment provides a variety of supports, such as job coaching, to assist customers in meeting employment goals.
- Assistive Technology - Many people with disabilities utilize a variety of technological devices to function in the world of work and increase their employment potential. The DRS VR program can assist customers with evaluation services and purchase of technology equipment that will meet their individual needs.
- Transition Services - Students with disabilities benefit from work-based learning experiences and other pre-employment services designed to prepare them for post-school employment or additional training.
- DRS counselors establish program eligibility based on an evaluation of functional limitations, then work with customers to develop an individualized plan for employment. Many services are provided through a network of community partners with the capacity to assist customers in obtaining employment consistent with their needs. These include:
 - Around 150 school districts which provide pre-employment transition services, including work-based learning experiences, to over 10,000 students with disabilities;
 - About 135 community rehabilitation providers who provide job development, job placement and supported employment services to around 4,000 individuals; and,
 - Community colleges and universities that provide training services to about 3,500 individuals pursuing degrees or credentials to enhance employment skills.

DRS works in partnership with other elements of the workforce system to provide people with disabilities access to a wide range of services and employment opportunities. DRS staff are members of local workforce boards and serve as a key linkage to information on disability awareness, work accommodations and accessibility requirements.

Employment First Initiative

An important resource for meeting the employment needs of Illinoisans with disabilities is the Employment First initiative. Illinois became an Employment First state in July 2013 with the passage of the Employment First Act (Public Act 98-91). Employment First is a national movement to promote competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities, particularly individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. WIOA defines “competitive integrated employment” as the key objective for people with disabilities, creating inherent synergy between the two laws.

In 2009, Public Act 96-0368 created the Illinois Task Force on the Employment and Economic Development for Persons with Disabilities (EEOPD) to work towards the goal of increasing competitive integrated employment for citizens with disabilities. Members of the task force are appointed by the Governor and include people with disabilities, business representatives and officials from state agencies. The Employment First Act assigned additional responsibilities to the EEOPD for coordinating state efforts in pursuit of the Act’s objectives.

The guiding principles of the WIOA Unified State Plan align directly with Employment First. The focus on integrated service delivery, robust engagement with business, competitiveness and accessibility, cross-agency collaboration and alignment of results-driven practices are shared by both the Unified State Plan and the Employment First movement and are in line with the findings and goals of the EEOPD. In addition, EEOPD is linked to the IWIB to ensure coordination and alignment of policy and practice rather than the IWIB creating a duplicative structure.

B. State Board

i. Membership Roster

Overseeing the entire workforce system on behalf of the Governor and General Assembly is the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB). The IWIB provides oversight and strategic leadership to the workforce development system to further the state's goals of meeting the workforce needs of businesses and workers. Appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Illinois Senate, IWIB members are charged with the task of reviewing the progress of the state's workforce development efforts. To meet this directive, the IWIB, in accordance with federal legislation, includes leaders from business, state agencies, industry, labor, education and community-based organizations. The Governor also appoints the two co-chairs for the IWIB. Currently, John Rico, President and CEO of Rico Enterprises, serves as the private sector co-chair with, Erin Guthrie, Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Table 17 outlines the membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

Members of the IWIB represent organizations, agencies or other entities and require optimum policymaking authority within those organizations. They must also represent diverse regions of the state, including urban, rural and suburban areas. Over 50% of the IWIB must be made up of business representatives. Other membership categories include: Governor and General Assembly appointments; state agencies; chief elected officials from cities and counties; labor organizations; youth activities representatives; workforce training representatives and education, including adult education; vocational rehabilitation; employment security; and other institutional representatives.

The Governor has made it a priority to recruit business leaders whose companies are also users of the workforce system. Requiring engaged business leaders provides the IWIB with better insight for setting policy that ensures workforce development activities are aligned and integrated with education and economic development in a way that serves the needs of employers, incumbent workers and job seekers. Business members of the board expressed their concerns during the strategic planning process that the publicly available general data does not always reflect the current conditions in their regions and local areas. Ensuring the active engagement of business allows for real-time information and data that might otherwise not be available in instances where system-generated information might have a data lag. The composition of the IWIB membership is under review to reflect the desire of all of its members to be more active and engaged in the functions and activities of the board. While ensuring its membership is in compliance with the requirements under WIOA, they will ensure accountability and authenticity of each appointed member. Members will be recognized for their efforts and support will be provided to those members that may need assistance in finding a suitable and effective means for participation.

To support and strengthen collaboration with the pre-school to post-secondary education system and local workforce boards and areas, the Governor has ensured members from the Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Board of Higher Education, Department of Human Services, the Illinois Community College Board, Career & Technical Education under the Carl D. Perkins Act, and the sitting president of the Illinois Workforce Partnership (IWP) have a central role on the state board as Ex-Officio, Non-Voting representatives.

The IWP is comprised of local workforce leaders from across the state that are dedicated to the enhancement of the Illinois workforce system. Through effective partnerships with business, economic development, education and training partners, the IWP collaborates to achieve its vision for Illinois as a “high quality, employer-driven, innovative, proactive workforce development system that supports economic development.” The IWIB recognizes the importance of having a local program administration voice in their discussions and invites representatives of the IWP to participate on their committees, task forces and work groups. Many of these individuals are staff to local workforce boards and represent their board’s interests at IWP functions. IWIB staff has been assigned as a liaison to the IWP in an effort to ensure ongoing two-way communication, including participation in each of their monthly meetings.

In addition to the IWP representative, Illinois law requires two additional members of the state legislature be appointed representing each chamber and party affiliation. Under the Workforce and Labor category, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board Act requires that the IWIB shall include individuals representing community-based organizations that provide or support competitive, integrated employment for individuals with disabilities. These 2 representatives shall be individuals who self-identify as persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, and who are engaged in advocacy for the rights of individuals with disabilities.

Table 17: Illinois Workforce Innovation Board Membership Roster

Last Name	First Name	Entity	
Pritzker	Governor JB	Governor of Illinois	State of Illinois Elected Officials
Bush	Melinda	Illinois Senate, 31st District	
Hammond	Norine	Illinois House of Representatives, 94th District	
Weaver	Chuck	Illinois Senate, 37th District	
Ashby	Tom	Coordinated Transportation Development, Inc	Appointed Business Members

Beards	Henry	United Parcel Service
Conley	Mike	Trenton Sun
Davidsmeyer	Christopher "C.D."	Illinois Road Contractors, Inc.; Illinois House of Representatives, 100 th District
Fabijanski	Pat	Hyatt - McCormick Place
Ferrari	Daniele	ITC, Inc
Friedman	David	AutonomyWorks
Gadberry	Kirk	North American Lighting, Inc.
Hacker	Thomas	C&L Supreme
Jones	Grailing	Schneider National, Inc.
Mason	Angela	Chicago Botanic Garden
Massie	Michael	Massie & Quick, LLC
McClinton	Marlon	Utilivate Technologies, LLC
Nain	Sandeep	Sntial Technologies, Inc.
Rico	John	John Rico Enterprises
Schiemann	Margi	Nicor Gas
Tennant	Aaron	Simplex Leasing, Inc.

Warrington	Andrew	United Conveyer Corporation	
Aranda-Suh	Elba	National Latino Education Institute	Appointed Workforce & Labor Members
Dickson	Victor	Safer Foundation	
Oilschlager	Barbara	Lake County Vocational System	
Payne	Terri	AFL-CIO	
Perry	Michael	AFSCME Council 31	
Wendorf	Thomas	Career Connect Metro West	
Wilkerson	Terry	Rend Lake College	

Chan	Thomas D.	Illinois Department of Employment Security	Appointed Representatives of Government
Guthrie	Erin	Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity	
Foster	Jennifer	Illinois Community College Board	
Patrick	Rahnee	Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services	
Walsh	Lawrence M.	Will County Executive	
Ayala	Dr. Carmen	Illinois State Board of Education	Ex-Officio, Non-Voting Members
Cerutti	Michelle	Illinois Workforce Partnership	
Durham	Dr. Brian	Illinois Community College Board	
Hou	Grace	Illinois Department of Human Services	
Robinson	Nyle	Illinois Board of Higher Education	
Thompson	Whitney	Illinois Community College Board	

ii. Board Activities

The State Board is scheduled to meet four times per year – typically in the Chicago area twice a year, Springfield once per year and the central/southern region once per year. Special meetings may be convened as deemed appropriate by the co-chairs to address special issues. The co-chairs are responsible for presiding over all IWIB meetings, establishing committees and their structures, as well as serving as custodians of IWIB records. All meetings of the IWIB, including committees, are subject to the Open Meetings Act. The IWIB operates and addresses its required functions and responsibilities through a structure consisting of standing committees, task forces and work groups. Additionally, the IWIB collaborates with the Governor’s Office, the core and required partners, other state agencies and other stakeholders of the system. Their organizational

chart is visualized in Attachment T (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/DownloadPrint/Visio-IWIB%20Organizational%20Chart%2001-01-20.pdf>)

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) has State staff from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity designated to coordinate the functions of the board, act as a liaison and provide overall operational support. In addition, the Executive Committee is responsible for the day-to-day board functions. Assisting the state staff in support of the IWIB's functions and ensuring efficient and effective operations are state university partners that provide research and facilitation to the board and its operational structure through the convening of standing committees, task forces and work groups.

Standing Committee Structure

The IWIB utilizes standing committees to assist with carrying out its responsibilities and functions and to coordinate discussions around larger-scale initiatives, targeted populations or key sectors. The committees are structured in one of two ways. Those that address the board's responsibilities and functions are comprised of only IWIB members. For those focused on strategic planning topics, the rosters include local representatives of boards, the chief elected officials or partner agencies, businesses and stakeholders with expertise on the subject matter, training and service providers, and other interested parties. Staff to the board and other supporting entities facilitate standing committees.

Executive Committee: To ensure that adequate business representation and alignment of workforce, economic development and education occurs throughout the system, the IWIB created an Executive Committee that must have a majority of business members and include representation from the education system. The Executive Committee has the authority to take action on functional requirements on behalf of the IWIB when time does not allow for an issue to be addressed at a regularly scheduled board meeting. A majority vote of the Executive Committee is required for all such actions, which must be reviewed by the full board at the next regularly scheduled meeting. In addition to the review and issuance of policy and processes related to the mandated board functions, the Executive Committee also is responsible to the full board with regard to:

- Leading the IWIB's strategic planning efforts;
- Making recommendations to the Legislature regarding state workforce legislation, as appropriate;
- Education and outreach to congressional members and state legislators;
- Coordination and collaboration with local workforce innovation boards;
- Outreach and recruitment of new board members;
- Education and outreach to congressional members and state legislators;
- Ensuring state education initiatives are aligned and connected to the state workforce system;

- Periodically reviewing the IWIB by-laws and making recommendations for amendments as appropriate; and
- Development and coordination of all regularly scheduled meetings of the full board.

Any interim or new policies for WIOA that are developed and presented to the Executive Committee go through a policy advisory process that will involve its members, WIOA partners and stakeholders. The intention is to make WIOA policy development in Illinois more collaborative and to ensure that it yields cost-effective and efficient guidance to the field. Occurring parallel to policy development is an implementation plan involving WIOA partners and stakeholders to discuss and develop reporting requirements, ensure performance, identify and implement systems changes and develop a monitoring plan.

A new professional development program is being developed by and for the Board that will address all of the above listed activities, an effort that will formalize and provide a consistent vehicle to ensure accountability in meeting their statutorily required function. Implementation began with approval of the plan in 2019 and formal implementation in 2020.

IWIB Leadership Team: In 2019, the IWIB convened members of the Executive Committee and Chairs of all standing committees, task forces and work groups to better coordinate their work assignments. Meeting monthly, the discuss agendas, priorities, opportunities to work collaboratively, and identify areas of commonality and overlap. In September 2019, the Leadership Team held a half-day retreat to continue discussions on modifications to its strategic plan. Revised, more streamlined, priorities were identified which will provide a more manageable framework for the next two strategic planning years.

The Leadership Team is also guiding professional development for the full board including a manual to better inform members regarding their functions and operational expectations, orientation and mentoring for all new members, outreach to local workforce boards, and an online board training program.

Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC): Originally formed as the Evaluation and Accountability Committee, the CIC represents the board with regard to oversight of current policies and strategic initiatives, and to make recommendations on appropriate assessments and evaluation measures. These recommendations must ensure that the board, its members and the system are meeting all of their statutorily required functions and commitments regarding policy guidance, as well as the performance measures outlined under WIOA. Furthermore, the CIC makes recommendations that will ensure the work occurring throughout the system is effectively providing a positive return on investment that is above and beyond the minimum performance expectations.

If additional measures of performance are identified, the CIC will also provide oversight of those. These may become the basis for a new Benchmark Report that will allow for a comparison of Illinois to similar states throughout the nation including several within the USDOL Region 5 boundaries. The efforts of the CIC are not to conduct monitoring of the regional and local workforce systems, rather the mission of the CIC is to identify best practices and recommend

continuous improvement opportunities. This committee is led by a business member and includes only board members representing businesses and the education system. They are supported by a team that conducts all necessary research, assists with research of available data and information, facilitates all meetings of the committee, and prepares documents for the full board that outline their recommendations for continuous improvement.

The development of continuous improvement systems will be led by the CIC. The IWIB will also continue to work with the Professional Development Team, comprised of representatives of the WIOA core partners and business, to identify and disseminate best practice information. A key continuous improvement activity is the WIOA Wednesday Webinars that are open to all IWIB members, core partners, required partners and local areas that cover best practices and coordination opportunities.

Beginning in 2020, the committee will be considering a more strategic and focused evaluation process from lessons learned through the US Department of Labor-facilitated Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort. Outside assistance from experts in the field of evaluating workforce programs will be considered and pursued as appropriate.

Career Pathways for Targeted Populations: The At-Risk Youth/Adults Standing Committee (Youth Committee) was reconstituted as a Career Pathways for Targeted Populations Committee. This committee will now focus on the targeted populations identified within the Unified State Plan to develop strategies and initiatives that provide career pathways for Illinois' most vulnerable individuals. Working with businesses, the education system, local workforce agencies and other interested stakeholders, business-driven talent solutions will be developed that build off previous years of success, such as Illinois Pathways and the Illinois 60 by 25 Network, which served to pursue scaling of career pathways.

An example of the work of the reconstituted committee is a cross-agency project in Kewanee, Illinois where the Department of Corrections is partnering with multiple entities to develop a training program for current residents of the Illinois Correctional system. The focus of the training is skill training coupled with life skills learning provided by the community college system to prepare the individuals for return to the general public. Job skills training is provided within the walls of the Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center or at nearby participating businesses. Preparing the individuals for careers and reducing the high level of recidivism are key objectives of the program. The committee will evaluate the activities and outcomes to refine and potentially expand this model to other areas of the state.

Apprenticeship Committee: The IWIB has identified the design of a comprehensive system of apprenticeships (traditional and non-traditional) as a major strategy for providing career pathways for economic advancement. To support this implementation, a standing Apprenticeship Committee was created which includes leaders representing all key state apprenticeship stakeholders: business and industry, training providers, Local Workforce Innovation Boards, labor, philanthropies, community colleges, vocational rehabilitation services and community-based organizations. The Apprenticeship Committee created a plan that establishes a comprehensive and integrated

apprenticeship system in Illinois and oversees its implementation, performance and continuous improvement. Initial strategies developed by the Apprenticeship Committee include:

- Aligning apprenticeship supply and demand;
- Organizing and engaging employers and industry partners;
- Fostering apprenticeship program innovation and expansion;
- Expanding access to under-represented populations, including women, minorities, and people with disabilities; and
- Promotion and branding.

Much of the progress towards implementing the work plan activities is overseen by the Marketing Work Group and the Systems and Supports Work Group. Through the work groups' efforts, the Committee has rebranded Apprenticeship Plus to Apprenticeship Illinois and created a website with apprenticeship resources for all audiences, under ApprenticeshipIllinois.com. The Committee has also defined and refined the roles of Regional Apprenticeship Navigators and Apprenticeship Intermediaries to better meet the needs of businesses and to better expand new and existing apprenticeship programs.

Employer Engagement Standing Committee - In December 2019, the IWIB approved the creation of a business-led Employer Engagement Committee Co-Chair by members who have been involved with the Integrated Business Services Workgroup. This decision was in recognition of the need to hear employer needs directly from them and their associates and colleagues and have them participate in the policy and legislative decision-making process. The committee was initially provided with three objectives to initiate their discussions and activity development: Identify Industry Sector Partnerships engaged in the workforce needs of the State of Illinois; Convene employers and WIOA service providers to better align business needs with training, services, and program design; and Identify target industries to focus on bringing together small and large employers with the Illinois workforce development system to discuss what is needed to streamline existing pathways and create new opportunities.

Additionally, the groundwork was laid in the IWIB Leadership Team discussions where the committee concept originated for additional considerations, including the committee structure and membership composition, staffing, and compliance with existing Federal, State and board requirements.

Information Technology Standing Committee - The Information Technology Committee was formed in 2017 and charged with several priorities, including: 1) the development of methodologies to assess employer needs and speed response times; 2) expand the range and flexibility of training and other service delivery methods to address the unique needs of populations and the regions of the state; and 3) contribute to the sustainability of technology strategies to support objectives across all IWIB goal areas and all Illinois Workforce Development partners. As a result of several factors, including the aforementioned streamlining of priorities of

the IWIB and recognition of long-standing challenges with creating universal technology systems, the IT Committee recommended to the full board that it be deactivated following 2019.

As part of the request to go on indefinite hiatus, available to reconvene as necessary, the committee identified 21 remaining outstanding activities that had been discussed. A source for consideration to review these activities was recommended to the board in its final report. Each responsible party will consider one of three actions related to the activities: accept and develop a plan to move forward in addressing the activity, identify that the activity is no longer a priority of the IWIB and should be placed in a holding status, or identify that the party is not appropriate for them to manage and request the Executive Committee consider a different course of action. In order to retain the vast knowledge and experience of committee members, each have chosen to continue working with other sub-groups of the IWIB or participate in the workforce and education system in other aspects.

Task Force Structure

The IWIB uses a Task Force structure to convene businesses and other interested partners to discuss topic-specific issues based on the established priorities of the IWIB. These groups are responsible for developing recommendations to present to the full IWIB for consideration. Currently, the IWIB has no active Task Forces, but continuously reviews the options to utilize such a structured sub-group to address future priorities.

Work Groups

The development of policies that are critical to the implementation of WIOA provisions occurs through organized work groups under the direction of the IWIB Executive Committee. These work groups are led by business members of the board and follow a policy process that ensures the full collaboration and consultation of local boards, chief elected officials, core partner agencies and other stakeholders. Policies may be based on identified needs for WIOA guidance, or on recommendations of the board to ensure minimum levels of compliance in such areas as governance, planning, performance accountability & reporting and service delivery.

Unified State Plan and Annual Performance Report Narrative Development – The IWIB is supported by the Executive Committee, Interagency Technical Assistance Team, the Interagency Data Team and board staff with the development and review of the technical requirements of the Unified State Plan. The vision, goal and strategic elements are developed in partnership with the IWIB, Governor and Interagency Leadership Team. The IWIB is supported by the agencies responsible for administering the core and required program to implement the Unified State Plan.

The annual report narrative is developed using the same approach and activities, reviewed and approved by the IWIB, and submitted in accordance with DOL and DOE guidance. The narrative reports on Illinois' ability to meet expectations outlined within the Unified State Plan. Successes are recognized, while challenges are outlined to inform the system of opportunities for continuous improvement.

The Annual Performance Report Narrative is expanded to include individual and business success stories, the annual performance report submission and issued to the Governor of Illinois and the General Assembly in accordance with the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board Act.

Certification of One-Stop Centers -- The IWIB issued policy in early 2017 that required all comprehensive one-stop centers be certified by the local workforce board by June 30, 2017. This policy describes the requirements and procedures for evaluating and certifying one-stop centers in Illinois under WIOA. Illinois' one-stop certification policy requires an evidence-based system of effective service delivery, physical and programmatic accessibility, and pursuit of continuous improvement opportunities.

The certification process ensures that local workforce innovation boards (LWIBs) oversee the delivery of employment and training programs in their communities and support high levels of effectiveness and sustainability. This process also requires assurance that implementation of the non-discrimination and Equal Opportunity provisions of WIOA Section 188 has been met through compliance with the Methods of Administration (MoA) and completion of an Accessibility Report at least once every three years.

In 2018, the policy work group convened again to review the past certification process and identified best practices that local boards utilized, as well as expand the policy to require that all affiliate and specialized centers be certified. The policy workgroup will continue to meet, review and revise the certification process as needed based on the ongoing certifications and feedback.

In order to ensure all necessary one-stop centers in Illinois achieve the required level of certification described in WIOA, Illinois convened a work group to define affiliate and specialized centers. The importance of knowing which locations providing WIOA services are considered "affiliates" or "specialized" centers is critical in ensuring several required state and local board functions are met. In addition to the certification of one-stop centers, infrastructure funding decisions, the need to enter into necessary memorandums of understanding (MOU), and effective provision of services to customers entering the local system whether at a physical location or direct linkage may be dependent on the appropriate identification of centers.

Eligible Training Providers - Illinois has current policy on Eligible Training Provider Lists (ETPL) and their Eligible Training Programs, which includes an allowable demand occupational training list, which was most recently updated in 2011. A policy work group was convened in 2019 to address recent State policy changes and interagency initiatives. The work group has identified six primary goals for it to address in new or revised policy:

- Improve the scope of information collected from providers;
- Improve the processes for information collection and management;
- Increase the transparency of quality performance data;
- Update the criteria and listing of demand occupations;
- Enhance articulation of training programs to career pathway and bridge programs; and

- Ensure out-of-state training providers meet equivalent criteria to in-state.

The first four goals were the work group's focus beginning in 2019. The focus for goal #1, improving the scope of information, is alignment to the interagency Common Program Information (CPI) initiative that seeks to obtain more comprehensive and higher quality information on career pathway programs across multiple agency funding streams. At its core, this effort is to align data collection and program approval processes to the unified Career Pathways definition to support mandated reporting for WIOA and Eligible Training Providers, as well as enhance systemic research capabilities and improve information available to potential program participants. In the future, the system will also serve as the basis for connecting data in support of participant outcomes data reporting as required by WIOA. The ETPL work group provided feedback on the CPI elements through a series of meetings.

In April 2019, DCEO sought and was awarded a \$1 million Workforce Data Quality Initiative for the "Pro Path Illinois" project. Pro Path Illinois will be a major focus for Illinois in 2020 and beyond with continued development and implementation. It is comprised of two aligned components to enhance programmatic data collected in administrative data across agencies (through implementing the CPI elements) and to generate greater analytic capacity to report on program efficacy and outcomes (through expanding the Illinois Administrative Data Research Facility – I-ADRF). Southern Illinois University-Carbondale's Center for Workforce Development (SIUC-CWD) is serving as the technical lead for the first project component to standardize data formatting and schemas and to integrate the combined CPI data into a centralized relational database. This system will have the ability to be augmented in such a way as to capture any CPI elements not covered through administrative datasets, as well as information from programs outside of the agencies' administrative ecosystems. Pro Path Illinois will also enable the State to combine CPI data with credential transparency data available through the Credential Engine project, whose lead technology partner is SIUC-CWD. Nationally standardized credential, quality assurance, competency, and assessment data from Credential Engine can supplement the CPI data.

Minimum Training Expenditure Requirement - Finally, the board continues to review its policy requiring a minimum level of combined Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funds be expended on direct training activities as defined within the policy. In addition to increasing the minimum level from forty to fifty percent (50%), the board further defined what it would consider as direct training by considering leveraged funds as calculable. Primary consideration was to eliminate a disincentive for local boards to seek and apply for additional funding sources that otherwise might affect their ability to meet the minimum expenditure rate.

The work group supported continuation of the Hold Harmless Clause, implemented in 2018, to be considered by the IWIB in instances where a local workforce innovation board was unable to meet the minimum expenditure rate, but could provide justification that this was as a result of unplanned and unavoidable circumstances. In 2019, the IWIB moved to deactivate this work group and shift evaluation and assessment responsibility for the policy to the Continuous Improvement Committee. If, through an effective evaluation and identification of needed changes, policy changes are necessary, the work group would reconvene to address them. Also, through the Illinois

Workforce Partnership, local boards and Title I administrators have been instructed through current policy to continue assessing the system and providing recommendations for changes to the policy.

III. b. 4. Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners

A. Assessment of Core Programs

The Governor, General Assembly, Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) and state agency partners continuously assess the performance outcomes of the workforce system in annual performance and benchmark reports. The state agencies responsible for each of the core programs outlined in program-specific areas constantly assess performance accountability measures at the state, regional and local levels as required by each core program. To ensure that program partners are well-positioned to meet the performance accountability requirements of WIOA, a working group on performance accountability was formed. This group will work with core partners to ensure that systems have the capacity to collect and report required new and updated data elements under WIOA, as well as the capacity to track aggregate data for performance indicators applicable to all four core partners to the extent possible.

The IWIB's Evaluation and Accountability Committee, since renamed the Continuous Improvement Committee, has identified three priorities they will apply to WIOA policies, programs and additional performance measures beyond core performance. These are: 1) evaluation of current and new WIOA policies issued by the board, 2) develop an understanding of how WIOA programs are evaluated, what continuous improvement processes are included, and what Technical Assistance is provided to address potential challenges, and 3) define the process that all IWIB committees, task forces and work groups, as well as WIOA partners, must utilize when conducting evaluations.

The core programs will continue to work with the IWIB to establish updated procedures to negotiate performance benchmarks as applicable. The state will develop strategies for aligning technology and data systems across core programs, and to evaluate common performance outcomes (including the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs by local areas). One potential tool to support that assessment is a dashboard to aggregate data for all core programs. A performance working group is exploring such a dashboard that, if practical, will provide a high-level view of each core program's performance by quarter and help identify the need for technical assistance or adjustments. Meanwhile, the state is working to identify common definitions, standards, and procedures to prepare core program partners to meet performance accountability requirements of WIOA. The intent is to ensure that data collected by each core program partner fully conforms to WIOA and accurately reflects the outcomes for each core program on a local level and in aggregate.

The ICCB will review current processes created by ICCB Adult Education staff and make LWIB's aware of new procedures. The process will detail to each LWIB appointed designee the review process based on the criteria established by ICCB. The completed review instrument will be submitted to ICCB. ICCB staff will identify areas under the provisions of WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy in which each of the 22 Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIB) is

required to review, not approve, the Adult Education competitive applications for Adult Education and Literacy federal and state funding through the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). The LWIBs reviewed applications submitted through the competitive process. The review process determines if there is alignment between the submitted Adult Education application and the local plan in each local workforce innovation area. The information gathered from the review will be used to evaluate alignment and develop ways to improve alignment between Adult Education and other core and required partners.

The Illinois Department of Employment Security will provide reporting for three employment-related performance indicators (employment rate in the second and fourth quarters after exit and median earnings in the second quarter after exit), status in unsubsidized employment and quarterly earnings through direct Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage match. Under “Effectiveness in Serving Employers” the State has selected the measures of “Retention with the same employer” and “Employer Penetration Rate.” Employment Security will report performance data for Retention by providing (UI) wage match, understanding that this is a shared outcome across all six core programs within the State and will be a combined reporting measure. Wage records will identify a participant’s employment using an establishment identifier – FEIN for example. The Employer Penetration Rate will be determined by each core provider tracking of the number of establishments served within a program year. The State will collect that data and compare it to the aggregate number of employers in a given State and/or county.

Illinois also established an interagency Technical Assistance Team – including representatives from all of the WIOA core partners and required one-stop partners administered by State agencies – to develop and issue field guidance for regional and local planning, the one-stop memoranda of understanding and cost-sharing agreements, and provide a mechanism to resolve local WIOA implementation issues between partners. This Interagency Technical Assistance Team also reviews regional & local plans, MOUs, and cost-sharing agreements to ensure that local areas have documents that are complete, compliant and committed to the integration of required programs under WIOA. This team works with the IWIB Committees and workgroups to update the planning and MOU guidelines as needed. The Governor’s Guidelines for MOU Development are typically updated annually to align MOUs with priority activities. The latest version incorporates concepts from the statewide Service Integration Self-Assessment completed by all LWIAs.

As discussed within the policy section, the IWIB charged the IWIB One-Stop Certification Policy workgroup to establish objective criteria and procedures for use by local boards in assessing and certifying Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, per Section 121(g)(1) of WIOA. The state standard certification criteria will help ensure a minimum level of quality and consistency of services in Comprehensive One-Stop Centers throughout Illinois, regardless of location. As local boards review and update the criteria and processes for certifying Comprehensive One-Stop Centers biannually, insights will be gained on establishing standards and assessing effectiveness, physical accessibility, programmatic accessibility and continuous improvement. These review processes will help identify best practices in assessing and improving local one-stop partner programs, both core and required programs, to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce development system. Outcomes from assessments of core program partners and other required

partners will be reported annually and made public. The latest version of the certification application has been updated to reflect the goals included in the IWIB's service integration policy adopted in early 2019. These goals also shaped service integration action plans and outcomes developed by each LWIA in September 2019. These plans will be used to inform WIOA local and regional planning and assessment of progress in addressing service integration priorities.

Illinois will continue to track and analyze each LWIA's training expenditure rate, fund obligation rate and planned vs. actual data on program enrollment. As a way to measure the WIOA Title IB direct training expenditures, the IWIB increased the current 40% minimum training expenditure rate to 50% in 2017. Final revisions have been made to the policy and the CIC is currently engaged in an evaluation process to determine if the policy is meeting its intended outcomes. The State will use the performance data, expanded benchmark report, plan/MOU submission and certification process to assess the quality effectiveness and improvement of programs in each local area.

The IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) has indicated they will be reviewing this information, as part of an overall review and analysis of all assessments conducted of the one-stop system to identify those best practices that all local workforce boards and one-stop operators could benefit from. Recommendations will be made to ensure the continuous improvement of all local workforce areas and ensure one-stop centers are providing the most effective and efficient services to customers.

B. Assessment of One-Stop Program Partner Programs

The Governor, the General Assembly, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) and state agency partners continuously assess the performance outcomes of the workforce system in annual performance and benchmark reports. The state agency responsible for each of the core programs outlined in program-specific areas regularly assesses performance accountability measures at the state, regional and local levels as required by each core program. To ensure that one-stop program partners are well-positioned to meet the performance accountability requirements of WIOA, a working group on performance accountability focused on coordinating core partners to ensure systems have the capacity to collect and report required new and updated data elements under WIOA, as well as capacity to track aggregate data for performance indicators applicable to all four core partners was established. The core programs will continue to collaborate with the IWIB working groups to establish updated procedures to negotiate performance benchmarks as applicable. The state will develop strategies for aligning technology and data systems across one-stop program partners and to evaluate common performance outcomes, including the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs by local areas. One potential tool to support that assessment is a dashboard to aggregate data for all core programs. A performance working group is exploring such a dashboard that, if practicable, will provide a high-level view of each one-stop program partners performance by quarter, and help identify the need for technical assistance or adjustments. Meanwhile, the state is working to identify common definitions, standards and procedures to prepare core program partners to meet performance accountability requirements of WIOA. The intent is to ensure the data collected by each one-stop program partner fully conforms to WIOA and accurately reflects the outcomes for each one-stop program partner on a local level and in aggregate. The state will apply the same measures and methodologies to other one-stop

partner programs that it does to core programs, in addition to any program-specific measures that are required by federal or state regulations.

As mentioned in the prior section, the Interagency Technical Assistance Team reviews WIOA regional and local plans and one-stop MOUs. The State level review of these documents provides each of the core partner agencies an opportunity to assess each of the 10 regions and 22 workforce areas in Illinois. The Team works with other IWIB Committees and workgroups to update the planning guidelines as needed to include information for assessing the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of the one-stop program partners. The most recent example of this is the requirement that all local LWIA partners collaborate in conducting service integration self-assessments. The results of these self-assessments, completed in September 2019, were used to develop and implement action plans to address service integration priorities. The CIC will assist in identifying best practices and recommendations for continuous improvement. They will also be considering opportunities to highlight Illinois' workforce programs and outcomes by identifying additional benchmark performance measures that can be compared to other States in USDOL Region 5 and throughout the nation.

As discussed within the policy section, the IWIB, in cooperation with the Interagency Technical Assistance Team, established objective criteria and procedures for use by local boards in assessing and certifying Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, per Section 121(g)(1) of WIOA. The state standard certification criteria will help ensure a minimum level of quality and consistency of services in Comprehensive One-Stop Centers throughout Illinois, regardless of location. As local boards review and update the criteria and processes for certifying Comprehensive One-Stop Centers biannually, insights will be gained on assessing and establishing standards on effectiveness, physical accessibility, programmatic accessibility and continuous improvement. These review processes will help identify best practices in assessing and improving local one-stop partner programs, both core and required programs, to promote efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce development system. Outcomes of the assessments of one-stop program partners will be reported annually and made public. The State will use the performance data, expanded benchmark report, plan/MOU submission and certification process to assess the quality effectiveness and improvement of programs in each local area.

DHS-TANF staff has increased their visibility and orientation participation at the one-stop centers to ensure TANF customers are identified for program assessment and engagement. A streamlined referral process has been implemented and continues to be revised based on observation and demonstration of how the referrals are being used and monitored. DHS-TANF staff actively participates in the monthly partners meetings and cross-training sessions held at the one-stop centers in order to continue to promote the definition of partner collaboration and service integration per the Governor's Guidelines. A key factor for TANF assessment measures is evaluation through surveys shared with the one-stop program partners regarding services and/or employment received from the centers. This creates a statistical model for accountability, measurement and areas of improvement.

C. Previous Assessment Results

The following assessments and evaluations were conducted:

The IWIB established the policy and procedures for the local certification of one-stop centers in 2017. The results included a report from local workforce board teams indicating whether they had achieved full certification or provisional certification. Those centers receiving only provisional certification were required to indicate to the local board a plan for corrective action. The details of these surveys were evaluated to determine necessary revisions to the current policy. In coordination with implementation of the Service Integration policy, discussions are being held to revise the Application for One-Stop Certification of all designated centers. These new criteria will be optional for certifications conducted prior to July 1, 2020, which reflects continued initial service integration implementation, but will be a mandatory requirement for an application submitted after June 30, 2020.

In PY2016 and PY2017, the ICCB negotiated goals for the Illinois Adult Education system for the first performance measure: Educational Functioning Levels. Each program year, Illinois achieved the targeted performance measure established. Over the past four years, Illinois Adult Education has increased its performance by 10%. In order to achieve the target, the Adult Education system has to meet and exceed 100% of the negotiated target. The same targets established at the state level are also the levels established at the local level.

In 2007, Illinois established a state performance measure for WIOA Title IB requiring a minimum training expenditure of at least 40% of the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams to be expended on defined directed training programs and services. Following a review of the current level of direct training expenditures in 2016, the IWIB assigned a policy work group to review the potential for continued improvement opportunities with this policy. Based on an analysis of the data, the board has approved revisions to this policy in three phases, culminating in PY2018. The IWIB and its Continuous Improvement Committee continue to monitor program activity and expenditures to determine if adjustments are warranted. Commerce staff regularly updates plan vs. actual data on participant enrollment into training and work-based learning and expenditure rates and provides this information to various interested workgroups.

The Department of Commerce analyzed the enrollment and services provided to basic skill deficient customers and identified several local areas that reported less than 25% of individuals as basic skills deficient. In response to these findings, Commerce held a corrective action webinar with LWIA leaders and emphasized the application of priority of service for Adult customers, and the impact on performance. Follow up review and analysis continue to ensure this population is being served in all LWIAs.

In PY2018, the Integrated Business Services workgroup developed and released a survey to businesses regarding their awareness of WIOA services, particularly apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning, and experience with the responsiveness of the workforce system. This survey was distributed to businesses through various channels over several months. The results of the survey led to a report with program recommendations completed in late 2019. Key findings of the report include:

1. 64% of employers either currently partner or would like to partner with similar companies to address shared challenges.
2. Employers expect and need higher quality candidates from the WFS system with “higher quality” giving equal weight to employability and technical skills; and companies want a more streamlined way to access workforce system services.
3. There is a disconnect between interest in and actual use of work-based learning models. Most companies are familiar with career awareness and internships; but while they are very interested in apprenticeships, they are not sure how to use this strategy. Only 2 percent of companies cited work-based learning not meeting their talent needs as a barrier, while the top response, over 30 percent, said the primary barrier is a lack of understanding of how to start a program.

Commercial Driver License Training Outcomes & Licensure Rates

The IWIB Transportation / Distribution / Logistics Task Force report issued in 2017 recommended continued, regular tracking of enrollment in WIOA-funded truck driver training programs and the number of licenses issued by the state. Commerce staff reviews enrollment and outcomes data quarterly and licensure rates annually.

CDL Table 1 and CDL Chart 1 below indicate annual truck driver training activity and outcomes from PY14 - PY18. *The progression toward employment includes all those that reached that status during the program year; the table does not track the progress of a single cohort of individuals. Depending on when a person enters training, they may reach one or more of the various milestones in the following year.*

The number Entered Training is the count of WIOA-funded individuals enrolled. The data on completers, credentials / CDLs and entered employment is drawn from program exiters. The analysis of activity over this five-year period highlights some interesting trends.

Key takeaways shown in CDL Table 1 include:

1. The number of training providers used by WIOA participants across the LWIAs dropped nearly 15% from 95 to 81.
2. People going into training, completing training and earning a CDL, and entering employment dropped almost 40%, over 50% and 2%, respectively. The decrease in the number going into training could be driven by a steadily improving economy. In 2014, the economy was still in the long, slow recovery following the Great Recession. The number of people entering CDL training may have been temporarily inflated and the decrease since then is a return to normalcy.
3. **HOWEVER**, the number of people actually getting a CDL dropped just over 2%. That’s a major disconnect with the other milestones. The gap between the number of people completing training and the number of people earning a CDL significantly narrowed. The next phase of the analysis will look at specific provider performance, including the

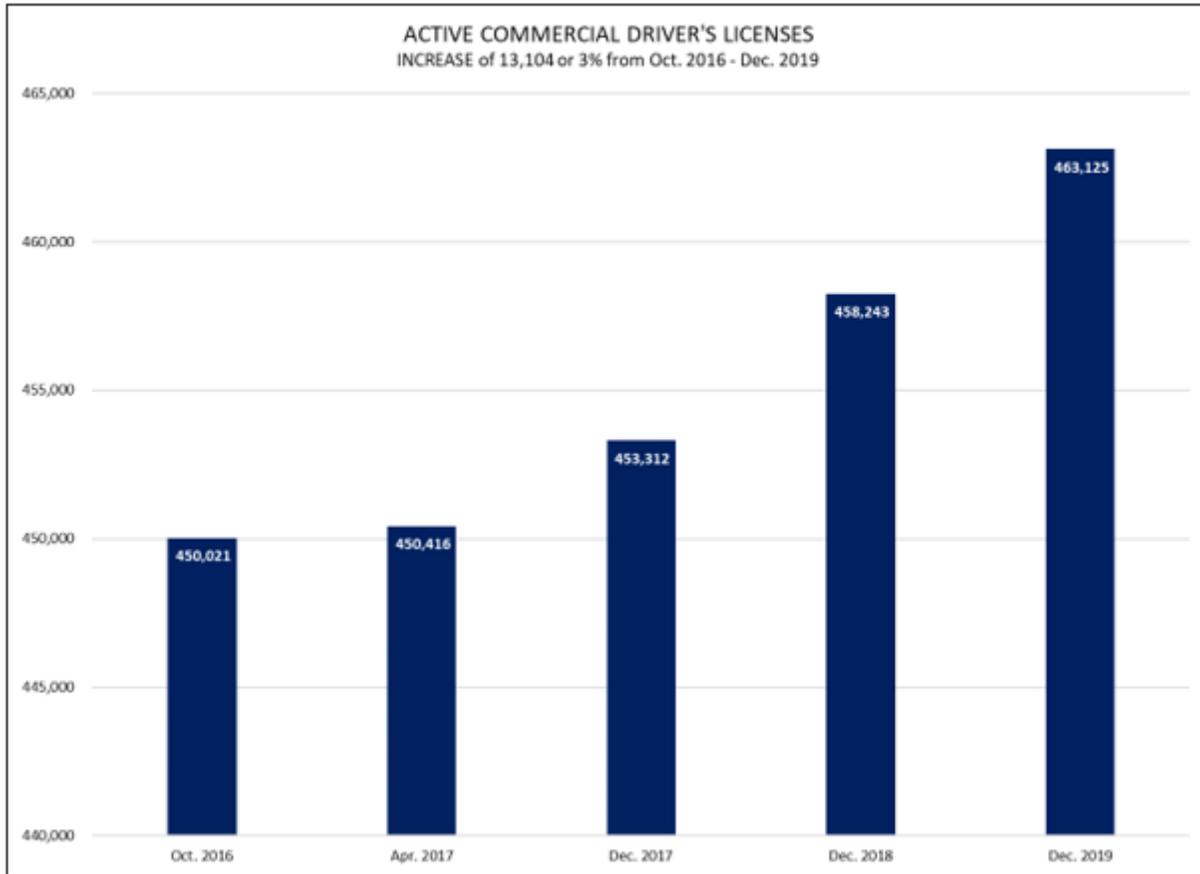
organizations that stopped providing WIOA training and possibly a statistical analysis to check correlation and causation.

4. We noted the PY14 number entering employment being larger than the number of CDLs earned. This may be due to a large wave of individuals that entered employment early in the year. It may be an artifact of how local case managers marked individuals in the system. Some registrants may have entered employment with a transportation company in a role that didn't require a CDL, or possibly the number of CDLs earned that year was underreported. It is likely due to some combination of several or all of these factors.

CDL Table 1							
WIOA / WIA Funded Commercial Driver's License Training							
PY July - June	PY14	PY15	PY16	PY17	PY18	Change 14-18	% Change 14-18
Active WIOA Training Providers	95	94	90	81	81	(14)	-14.7%
Entered Training	1,493	1,445	1,243	869	899	(594)	-39.8%
Exiters Completed Training	1,263	1,382	1,035	741	597	(666)	-52.7%
Exiters Earned CDL	464	636	598	504	453	(11)	-2.4%
Exiters Entered Training-Related Employment	610	606	563	375	397	(213)	-34.9%

The following CDL Chart 1, based on data provided by the Illinois Secretary of State, indicates the number of active CDLs in Illinois increased just over 13,000 or 3% from 2016 to 2019. The increase includes a significant number of WIOA-funded trainees that contributed nearly 15% of the growth.

CDL Chart 1



Work-Based

Commerce staff tracks enrollment in work-based learning to determine the effectiveness of efforts to increase the use of these training models. The table below indicates the degree to which 4 out of 5 types of work-based learning enrollment experienced tremendous growth between PY15 and PY18. WIOA-funded pre-apprenticeships were non-existent in Illinois and over 200 individuals are enrolled. Likewise, apprenticeship enrollment increased significantly every year since PY15.

Learning

The only type of work-based learning to not have a significant increase over this four-year span was on-the-job training. However, after a two-year dip in activity, in PY18 OJT enrollment jumped 26 percent from the prior year.

Table 18

WORK-BASED LEARNING ENROLLMENT						
Year	Job			Pre-Apprenticeship		TOTAL
	Shadowing	Internship	OJT	Training	Apprenticeship	
PY15	26	200	789	-	19	1,034
PY16	36	188	632	13	34	903
PY17	63	247	622	48	105	1,085
PY18	59	220	784	205	153	1,421
% Change	126.9%	10.0%	-0.6%	20400.0%	705.3%	37.4%
Source: Illinois Workforce Development System						

ICCB conducted a survey in the spring of 2019 regarding the number of apprenticeships at community colleges. Over 2,000 students were in some type of apprenticeship training ranging from traditional trades to finance and insurance.

Incumbent Worker Training

Commerce staff also conducts a regular analysis of incumbent worker training activity. This review includes the number of projects, employers and workers trained, and analysis of company sector, location, size, whether companies return for additional training, and project funding source. Over the same PY15 - PY18 time frame used for the work-based learning analysis, locally funded incumbent worker training has seen dramatic increases in every way to measure activity - the number of employers, projects and workers enrolled are all up.

This is largely due to IWT being considered an allowable activity under WIOA and the removal of the layoff aversion requirement under WIA waivers that proved to be a significant barrier to employer participation.

Table 19

FORMULA FUNDED INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING ACTIVITY				
Year	Number of Employers	Number of Projects	Employees Enrolled	Project Cost
PY15	42	53	795	\$ 722,400
PY18	240	318	2,911	\$ 4,127,988
Change	198	265	2,116	\$ 3,405,588
% Change	471.4%	500.0%	266.2%	471.4%
Source: Illinois Incumbent Worker Tracking System				

D. Evaluation

The Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) will take the lead in determining appropriate actions and recommendations to the IWIB regarding the design of evaluation and research projects across all four partners and one-stop required partners as opportunities arise. The CIC will review all common performance measures to identify strategies that are effective in allowing local boards to meet their performance targets. Similarly, they will look at key factors that might present challenges to those boards that prevent them from meeting their goals. From this information, they will identify and make recommendations regarding strategies that all boards should consider as methods for continuous improvement. The CIC will be reviewing all policies and processes to determine their relationship to positive outcomes, as well as to determine if outcome results conformed to the intended goals. They will develop recommendations based upon their findings. Recommendations could be incorporated within new or revised policies, provided in informal guidance, and considered for inclusion in professional development and technical assistance opportunities.

Illinois applied and was accepted for participation in the USDOL-ETA facilitated Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort. The CIC will use the knowledge and experiences gained by Illinois' cohort team, the tools and assessments utilized during the project, and other information from sister cohort states to help guide future development of evaluations. The team is a collaboration of state and local representatives of WIOA core partners who will report their experiences to the CIC for incorporation into their strategic decision-making. Additionally, experts in the field of evaluating workforce programs may be consulted for further guidance.

Current policies that provide immediate opportunities to assess results are the minimum training expenditure requirement, the one-stop center certification and the service integration self-assessment. This new information and best practices learned from the cohort project will be incorporated within the CIC evaluation process beginning in 2020 and applied to these policies and others identified through future discussions.

The IWIB approved an increase in the minimum training requirement that at least 50% (from 40%) of the combined Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams must be expended on defined direct training activities and services. Many factors were considered during the development of this increase, including business demands that they are not provided adequately skilled individuals to meet their needs, the WIOA's emphasis on utilizing available funds to better prepare the customer for a career through training, and the knowledge that work-based training models historically have better employment outcomes for customers than those without such training. Additionally, the increase was sought as new types of expenditures were allowed as calculable including leveraged funds, such as those from certain statewide activities grants.

The IWIB has had difficulty in developing an effective method to evaluate these outcomes. Over the next one-two years, the board will continue to research effective methods of evaluating policies, including consultation with other stakeholders, identification of effects on the workforce, and employment in particular. Additional revisions to the formula for calculating the minimum training expenditure will be discussed to ensure there are no unintended disincentives from this policy.

The one-stop center certification policy provides key information on the one-stop system in each local area that can be analyzed and compared to other centers. This information can be utilized to identify best practices and to share them with the other one-stop center operators for implementation at their facilities. The next round of certifications will address all designated comprehensive, affiliate and specialized centers utilizing a revised process that reflects service integration goals and outcomes. The IWIB will utilize the information to make recommendations for continuous improvement opportunities by all local boards and one-stop operators and partners.

Other examples of how the state is conducting or plans to conduct evaluations and research projects include:

- The Reemployment Service and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program is administered by the Illinois Department of Employment Security and is intended to address individual employment needs for unemployment insurance (UI) customers who have been determined most likely to exhaust benefits and transitioning veterans receiving unemployment compensation for ex-service members (UCX). IDES Economic Information and Analysis Division will begin using evidence-based strategies to conduct evaluations on the intervention and service delivery models used to administer the RESEA program. The goal is to ensure the service delivery strategies used are reducing the benefit duration and improving the employment outcomes for those UI customers and transitioning veterans. As the program evaluations begin and continue throughout the upcoming fiscal years, IDES will add to the evidence base; increase the workforce system's understanding of what interventions are successful, for which population of customers and in what context; and expand the use of those service delivery models with strong evidence of success.

- In collaboration with the Cook County Court, the Illinois Department of Employment Security is participating in an Alternative to Incarceration initiative. This initiative provides workforce assistance to delinquent parents of the domestic court division in the Markham Courthouse. As a final opportunity for job placement or retention assistance before punishment (and possible incarceration is imposed), delinquent parents are referred to IDES for assistance in finding employment or employment with a larger wage. Staff are on-site weekly to ease transportation concerns and provide regular follow-up and communication with referring judges. With input from the Cook County Court, IDES will begin to evaluate the service delivery model used to assist this population which could include referrals to training, educational or support services, and the employment outcomes success rate.
- Beginning in FY 2020, the Illinois Department of Employment Security, in collaboration with the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership and representatives from the City of Chicago, will deliver pre-release and post-release workforce services to returning citizens being released from Cook County Jail. The population of returning citizens will fall into three categories to include Sheriff's Anti-Violence Efforts (SAVE) – young males (18-24) with a high likelihood of recidivism; County Sentenced- adult males with short sentences; and Boot Camp – adult males generally under 20, paramilitary. Prior to implementing, the team will evaluate the pros and cons of serving the populations identified and the service delivery strategies that will be used.
- The Department of Commerce issued Notices of Funding Opportunity for Workforce Innovation projects in 2017 and 2018. One of this initiative's target activities includes research and evaluation projects designed to provide insight into the use of best practices and to determine the effectiveness of current workforce efforts. These efforts will not be limited to evaluating Title IB activities, and thus could be used for a wide range of research topics relevant to improving the state's workforce. Potential research projects will be checked for alignment and coordination with DOL / DOE evaluations. Project concepts could originate from the IWIB, the WIOA core partners, an LWIA or group of LWIAs, or other interested organizations or partnerships, such as sector partnerships, regional and local chambers of commerce, etc. All grants funded under these NOFOs include a requirement for the grantee to conduct a formal evaluation of grant activities, with an assessment of planned vs. actual outcomes, potential best practices and lessons learned. An evaluation template was developed and implemented in 2019 as the first of these grants approach the end of their performance period. These evaluations will be shared with the system as they are completed in 2020 and beyond to help inform and refine future investments and workforce strategies.
- Under the ICCB Adult Education Competitive Grant process, core and some required partners will be used to evaluate grant applications based on established criteria as listed in the Request for Application. Each person participated as part of a team led by ICCB staff. All reviewers were provided training, signed a confidentiality agreement, and attended meetings to reach consensus on application scoring.

- All Core Partners are participating in a multi-state DOL study on Effectiveness in Serving Employers Performance Indicators. Researchers from the Urban Institute, George Washington University and Capital Research Corporation plan site visits with key state-level staff from Titles I - IV and at least two local workforce areas in the spring of 2020. In addition to engaging with state administrators and local WIOA staff as part of the scan of the states, the research team also will work with key national associations to request help with survey outreach to their members, including the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), National Association of State Directors of Adult Education (NASDAE), and DirectEmployers. CSAVR and NASDAE members include state administrators of adult and vocational rehabilitation agencies. DirectEmployers members include 875 employers of Fortune 1000 companies that are mostly federal contractors. NASWA members include administrators of adult, dislocated worker and youth programs, and, in many cases, other core programs. The study team is also engaging a federal workgroup at key points in the study to leverage the rich expertise of DOL and Ed agency staff, and convening a subject matter expert (SME) panel at critical junctures over the life of the study. An Interim Brief summarizing data collection efforts is planned for a Fall 2020 release, followed by a Final Report.

III. b. 5. Distribution of Funds for Core Programs

A. For Title I programs

i. Youth Activities

Illinois will distribute Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth funds according to Section 128(b)(2)(A). Illinois does not intend to distribute WIOA Youth Program funds to local areas based on the youth discretionary allocation formula contained in Section 128(b)(3)(B). Utilizing the additional factors contained in Section 128(b)(3)(B) would, in our estimation, undermine decisions by the Governor and the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board regarding the local area boundaries within which WIOA should operate locally. In many instances, local areas would likely be left without the amount of funding necessary to allow them to operate viable youth programs.

ii. Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3)

Distribution of Funds-Title I (Adult)

Illinois will distribute WIOA Adult funds according to Section 133(b)(2)(A). Illinois also does not intend to distribute funds to local areas for adults based on the adult discretionary allocation formula contained in Section 133(b)(3)(B). As with the discretionary youth allocation described above, utilizing the additional factors contained in Section 133(b)(3)(B) would likely undermine the decisions by the Governor and the Illinois Workforce Board regarding the local workforce area boundaries. In many instances, local areas would likely be left without the amount of funding necessary to allow them to operate viable adult programs

- <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20Q%20-%20%20Methods%20in%20Distributing%20Funds%202020.pdf>).

iii. Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned

Illinois intends to allocate WIOA dislocated worker funds on the basis of the formula described below, pursuant to section 133(b)(2)(B). Each of the following factors will be used to distribute 25% of the funds to be allocated:

- Insured unemployment data: Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) unemployment insurance (UI) claimant data for the most recently completed calendar year will be used. Each local workforce area's share of the state total of such claimants is determined, and the area is allocated that share of the funds apportioned by this factor.
- Unemployment concentrations: Unemployment figures for the most recently completed program year will be used. Only counties with unemployment rates above the statewide average will be included in the formula. Each workforce area's share of the state total of such unemployment is determined, and the area is allocated that share of the funds apportioned by this factor.
- Declining industries data: For each workforce area, employment by three-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code is determined for the first calendar quarter (January-March) of the two most recent years for which data is available from IDES' ES-202 UI-covered employment report. The number of jobs lost within industries showing an employment loss from one year to the next is totaled for each area. Each workforce area's share of the state total of such employment loss is determined, and the area is allocated that share of the funds apportioned by this factor.
- Long-term unemployment data: IDES data for the number of UI claimants who were unemployed for 15 or more weeks during the most recently completed calendar year will be used. Each workforce area's share of the state total of such long-term claimants is determined, and the area is allocated that share of the funds apportioned by this factor.
- The plant closing and mass layoff data and farmer-rancher economic hardship factors will be given zero weighting under the WIOA dislocated worker allocation formula, due to a lack of public use data sources with sufficient geographic detail to adequately serve the requirements of an allocation formula.

B. For Title II

i. Multi-year grants or contracts

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is the state's eligible agency for adult education and literacy programs. ICCB is responsible for administering funds and providing program/performance oversight to grantees.

Adult education and literacy eligible providers approved under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) will continue to receive funding through, June 30 2020, as long as they adhere to state and federal grant expectations, as measured through annual application, financial reports and program performance reports. The ICCB will award four-year grants or contracts to all eligible applicants who meet the required criteria. The grant contract will reflect a number of variables, including availability of funding, demonstrated effectiveness from year to year, and other factors. The length of the multi-year grant or contract will be four years to correspond with the effective period of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Illinois will use a four-year grant or contract process that will be subject to renewal or continuation annually. Applicants may apply as a single entity or as part of a consortium. The application process used to award funding for eligible adult education applicants will be the same for every applicant. All eligible applicants of demonstrated effectiveness must provide evidence of their ability to meet or exceed prescribed performance outcomes and provide evidence of their capacity to provide instructional and support services to the targeted populations identified. Continuation of a grant or contract from year to year is contingent on sufficient funding and submittal and approval of an official application that includes demonstration of adequate and effective performance in the prior year.

The competitive process for grants in Illinois is subject to the Illinois Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA), which is based on EDGAR, the Education Department General Administrative Regulations and FFATA, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act. During the competitive grant cycle, all eligible providers will be notified of the funding opportunity through a uniform public notification and application process and will be asked to submit a competitive application, as well as complete a thorough pre-qualification process. All providers who meet all of the eligibility requirements will be able to access and participate in the application process of a competitive grant cycle.

During 2016-17, the ICCB implemented a new competitive application process for all federal and state Adult Education and Literacy Act (AELA) funding that determined the eligible providers that were awarded funds starting July 1, 2017. The review of proposals included rating responses of the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA, as well as one state consideration of making certain the applicant's proposed budget is consistent with the eligible provider's activities, is cost-efficient within administrative guidelines and places emphasis on serving the target populations. The next competitive application process will be in the Spring of 2020 for FY2021.

The considerations that were used in the competitive process are listed below.

- 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.).
- The program is of sufficient intensity and duration for individuals, including those with learning disabilities, to achieve substantial learning gains.

- 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.
- The demonstrated alignment to the requirements of the adult education services and activities, as well as alignment to the local plans.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 post-secondary education and training, advance in employment, and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- 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.
- The program activities are coordinated with other available resources in the community, such as establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, post-secondary institutions, Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, job training programs, business, and social service agencies.
- The program offers flexible schedules and supportive services (such as childcare and transportation) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs.
- 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.
- The local communities have a demonstrated need for additional English Literacy programs and civic education programs.
- 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 (state consideration).

Timeline

The following steps will be taken in conducting the AEFLA competition:

Competition Timeline	Activities
January - February	ICCB publishes four-year federal AEFLA Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) aligned with the priorities in the approved Unified State Plan and in compliance with state GATA and federal EDGAR and FFATA rules.
February - March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An open bidder’s conference will be held to provide an overview of the competitive NOFO. • ICCB provides technical assistance to inquiries from potential eligible providers. • ICCB recruits candidates to review and score AEFLA grant applications.
February - April	-FAQs are posted to the ICCB website to distribute broadly the questions asked during the bidders conference, as well as during the entire process.
March - April	Due date for AELA grant applications.
April - May	Reviewers review and score AELA grant applications.
April	ICCB conducts review of budgets and other grant requirements and develops a rank-ordered slate based on applicant scores.
May - June	ICCB announces AEFLA grant applicants that will receive funding, contingent upon the release of state and federal funding.
July 1	AEFLA grant providers begin grant cycle, programming and funding.
Continuation Plan Timeline	Activities
February - March	Publish the Adult Education and Literacy Continuation Plan aligned with the priorities and in compliance with state GATA and federal EDGAR and FFATA rules.
March – April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web-ex informational meeting • ICCB provides information to current providers • ICCB organizes the grant reading process
April	Questions from the web-ex informational meeting will be posted to the ICCB website.

Continuation Plan Timeline	Activities
May	Due date for AEFLA grant applications.
May- June	Reviewers review and score AELA grant applications.
May	ICCB determines the needs from continuing providers to satisfy requirements.
June -July	ICCB announces AELA grant applicants that will receive funding, contingent upon the release of state and federal funding.
July 1	AELA grant providers begin grant cycle, programming, and funding.

The ICCB will provide funding to eligible local entities for the provision of adult education services through a competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Through this process, the ICCB will identify, assess and award four-year grants to eligible providers throughout the state. An eligible applicant is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include: a local education agency; a community-based or faith-based organization; a volunteer literacy organization; an institution of higher education; a public or private nonprofit agency; a library; a public housing authority; a nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services; a consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries or authorities described above; and a partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

To determine if an applicant is an organization of demonstrated effectiveness, all applicants will be required to provide data demonstrating their ability to improve the skills of low-literate adults in the applicable instructional areas as described in the NOFO. Applicants may use existing data to demonstrate the ability to achieve state and federal performance measures for all student levels including English language learners or provide data and information to demonstrate the ability to assist learners in achieving learning gain, including low-literacy level and English language learners. An applicant will be required to demonstrate its record of improving the knowledge and skills needed to transition successfully to post-secondary education, skills training or employment. Each application will be reviewed to determine whether it meets the standard of demonstrated effectiveness. Applications that do not provide sufficient evidence of demonstrated effectiveness will not be considered for funding.

In continuation years of a multi-year grant cycle, demonstrated effectiveness will be evaluated based on past performance in achieving state negotiated performance measures, as well as achieving the prescribed requirements of the grant, including the attainment of educational functional level increases/measurable skills gains, and successful programs that transition students to post-secondary education, training and employment.

Funding Distribution

Title II Adult Education and Literacy funding will be used to provide prescribed instructional and supportive services in all of the designated Area Planning Councils (APCs) in Illinois. The APCs, designated by Illinois state statute as the geographic units for adult education funding distribution, are aligned with each of the 39 community college districts which are represented in each workforce region as well as Local Workforce Innovation Area. Funds that are awarded through competitive grant cycles will be distributed through the use of a comprehensive funding methodology that is based on the APC's index of need, as calculated on an annual basis using the most recent United States Census Data/American Community Survey results. The variable used includes literacy needs of both the English-speaking population and the English language population, as well as poverty and unemployment needs in an area.

During the Fall of 2019 and continuing through Spring 2020, the ICCB is examining a new distribution of funding methodology for the FY2021 or FY2022 cycle. Currently, within an APC, the funds are then distributed proportionately among approved eligible providers based on a variety of elements including but not limited demonstrated performance, previous data, instruction and enrollments. During continuation years in a multi-year grant cycle, the funding formula will also take into account the most recent completed and verified data of skill gains as a continuous indicator of demonstrated effectiveness. Providers who are new to the process will be awarded funding based upon their proposed enrollments as indicated in their application as related to the funding request.

ii. Ensure direct and equitable access

All grants awarded through the State of Illinois are subject to the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA), based on EDGAR, the Education Department General Administrative Regulations and FFATA, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act. Under GATA, all grant applications and awards are subject to uniform processes to ensure transparency, fairness and equitable access to all eligible participants and providers. Grant notifications are performed through the posting of a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to a public web portal, Grants.Illinois.gov, where all of the eligibility criteria, application and grant requirements, and an explanation of the application and approval process are posted. The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), state eligible agency, will also provide notification and access to the public portal through the use of the ICCB web site and with direct electronic mail notifications to all potential applicants, including both current providers and eligible potential providers. Eligible providers must then complete a thorough pre-qualification and application process in order to be considered for a grant. The ICCB will use the same application, process, and rubric/grading process for all applicants submitting an application. Once a funding determination is made, the ICCB will publish a Notice of State Award to the GATA portal and the ICCB website.

The ICCB will use the same announcement and application and submission procedures for all eligible applicants under WIOA Sections 225, 231, and 243. Each application will be reviewed and evaluated using the same criteria as indicated in the grant or contract application. Each

applicant must address the areas that are applicable. Eligible applicants will be asked to address applicable activities listed below:

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training.

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) published and distributed broadly a Competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) in the Spring of FY 2020, which was aligned with the Unified State Plan, WIOA Title II; Adult Education and Literacy and other education and workforce plans. During a competitive year, to be considered for funding an applicant 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
 - 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 adult education and literacy services to eligible individuals
 - Consortium or coalition 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 regional workforce plans are essential.

All grants awarded through the State of Illinois are now subject to the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA), based on EDGAR, the Education Department General Administrative Regulations and FFATA, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act. Notification of continuation plan application availability will be via listserv. Eligible providers must then complete a thorough pre-qualification and application process through the public web portal, Grants.Illinois.gov. Eligible providers may then apply for grants. The continuation of an applicant is contingent upon the availability of federal and state funding; a sufficient appropriation of funding, as well as the applicant's demonstrated effectiveness in serving the target population, achieving the state negotiated performance targets, and the ability to meet all grant eligibility requirements.

C. Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation

This is not applicable to the State of Illinois.

III. b. 6. Program Data

A. Data Alignment and Integration

i. Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.

The Illinois core partners have long-standing data sharing agreements in place whereby the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce), Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) request data matching of the Unemployment Insurance Wage Record Data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security). The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) has motivated the agencies to look closely at the long-term agreements and determine if changes need to be made to accommodate the new and innovative sharing of data between the agencies.

The agreements facilitate cross-program access to data about common participants while minimizing duplicative systems costs. In addition to one-on-one data access, the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) and the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) fully executed a multiple agency data sharing agreement with all the State of Illinois educational and workforce agencies. This data sharing agreement allows for the sharing of agency data via the newly established Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator (CDDA). The interagency agreements and the CDDA arrangement establish a master client index number for all clients and

facilitates integrated and streamlined service delivery, common reporting and measurement of interagency longitudinal performance outcomes as required under WIOA Section 116(d)(2).

Illinois will continue to use existing web-based interfaces that integrate data via Application Program Interface (API) tools. Real-time access to workforce development resources for individuals, businesses and workforce professionals is available, shareable and viewable in user-friendly dashboards for better customer service. Ongoing discussions include how to further integrate the Internet-based data systems to enhance program alignment and service delivery.

- Currently the Illinois workNet portal connects individuals and businesses to workforce services and data. The new Beta version of the portal serves as a hub for WIOA implementation resources and guidance for all required programs. The open-source and widget technology available in the new version allow for maximum agility in on-demand program development and implementation needs.
- Employment Security administers the IllinoisJobLink (IJL) system to collect data on job seeker and employer customers. IllinoisJobLink.com is an internet-based system with a centralized job search engine and resume service that integrates workforce customer information to facilitate coordination of services across partner programs.
- The Illinois Community College Board—Adult Education administers the Illinois Data and Information System (DAIS-i), which is a web-based system that collects relevant student-level record data on education, attendance, courses and employment data needed for reporting to WIOA.
- The Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services. The Web Case Management System (WebCM) is the primary case management system for the Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program, providing electronic storage of customer case records, as well as links to other systems that display information related to case requirements. WebCM is an internet-based system that can be accessed from any location with appropriate security and was developed internally by DHS information systems staff.

The IWIB and the Continuous Improvement Committee will work to align the state's evaluation and reporting strategies to ensure that they will be supported by the improved data systems. The state will align the work of the ILDS and the CDDA project with WIOA implementation. The ILDS will enable state agencies to link workforce, education and early childhood data to help understand how to best meet Illinois' workforce and education needs. The focus of the ILDS is on developing a reporting system for areas that are important to Illinois parents, students, teachers, program administrators and policymakers. The CDDA addresses the challenge of linking records across state agencies that use different identifiers for the same individual. This initiative provides a technical record matching and identity resolution procedure and software to securely and confidentially match records across seven different agencies that include the four core partners:

- Illinois Department of Commerce
- Illinois Community College Board

- Illinois Board of Higher Education
- Illinois State Board of Education
- Illinois Department of Employment Security
- Illinois Student Assistance Commission
- Illinois Department of Human Services

Six agencies have completed data-sharing agreements and have begun to submit to the CDDA so that unique individual identifiers may be assigned across agencies. The data-sharing agreement for the seventh agency is near completion. To date, 69.7 million records have been processed and 14.2 million unique individuals identified. This opportunity to use longitudinal data to assess education and employment outcomes over time will be included in the scope of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board's (IWIB) accountability and evaluation strategies.

ii. Describe the State's plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.

Illinois is working to align and integrate participant and performance data across WIOA programs with the ultimate goal of providing effective and efficient services that lead to the participants' employment as quickly as possible. Since the submittal of the Unified State Plan in 2016, the Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) conducted two phases of an independent *WIOA Technical Assessment* of the core partners' applications supporting the WIOA programs. The goal of the *WIOA Technical Assessment* is to identify technical solutions to better integrate the WIOA system in Illinois. The state Chief Information Officer contracted with technical experts to lead the assessment team that included technical leads from each of the WIOA core partners. The team identified that the WIOA data integration strategy should include:

- Functional and technical assessment of external and internal systems that can act as the common intake solution;
- Generation of unique customer identification;
- An automated initial assessment based on intake questions;
- Automated referral to partner agencies;
- Common dashboard for participant information;
- Identification and execution of the appropriate procurement plan;
- Execution of an inter-governmental agreement among partner agencies to fund and use a common intake system;
- Upgrading of agency solutions where needed to integrate to common intake solution; and
- Definition of detail plans by working with HHi2 program and state data practice for data warehouse and Master Data Management solutions.

The scope of the WIOA technical assessment included a review of business, information and system architecture and current applications supporting WIOA programs for the core partner businesses. This assessment is a key step in developing the capacity for common intake and improving service delivery. The WIOA technical assessment team's approach was to view the WIOA core partners collectively as an enterprise or program that is responsible for providing job seekers with a technology offering *Single Sign-On (SSO) access, Integrated Workforce Registration (IWR)*, real-time triage and coordinated service provisioning for the portfolio of WIOA programs. The WIOA technical assessment team approached the assessment of each of the core partner's systems from a customer-centric, job seeker user experience. The WIOA technical assessment team's approach aligned with the employment Training Administration's national vision for states to provide "a system that is driven by a single Workforce System Registration as the entry point to the nation's *reemployment system* and offers a coordinated customer-centric focus with full partner access." DoIT and the agency partners have developed the following strategic recommendations as a result of the assessments:

- Create a configurable, web-based intake solution capable of conducting initial assessment and referral to appropriate partner systems;
- Allow partners to maintain and enhance their existing solutions to effectively manage eligibility, enrollment and cases;
- Develop a WIOA hub system capable of integrating with any number of existing and new agency systems to coordinate and update data needed for processing;
- Leverage the state's Health and Human Services Innovation Incubator (HHi2) Master Data Management solution to generate unique participant identification numbers based on attributes collectively defined by the state; and
- Migrate data to the state's proposed data warehouse environment for business intelligence and analytics.

As part of its 2017 Strategic Planning process, the IWIB identified its Service Integration Policy Workgroup as the lead party for implementing the strategies towards its priority activity to provide a uniformly positive customer experience for job-seekers at all Illinois one-stop centers. These strategies include making the system easy to navigate and promoting a "no wrong door" approach that will adopt, adapt, or create one or more models of streamlined intake and referral that one-stop centers throughout the state can utilize to improve service delivery.

iii. Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) established an Evaluation and Accountability Committee, since renamed the Continuous Improvement Committee, that will create a framework of the data elements and requirements that will be key inputs for the alignment of technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs in Illinois. This is a critically necessary

activity for the IWIB to effectively evaluate and identify continuous improvement opportunities to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of Illinois' workforce development system. During the first year, the committee will create a framework by which to work. For the accountability component, the committee will map the components of the Unified State Plan to the work being carried out by all of the IWIB committees. Early work on evaluation will address questions of service delivery and potential approaches to answering those questions. In subsequent years, the committee will begin looking at larger questions related to evaluation and performance. The committee will review the research agendas of various components of the system and identify opportunities to strengthen alignment and prioritization of research questions. The availability of the Illinois Longitudinal Data System and the Comprehensive Demographic Dataset Administrator will open new evaluation and research opportunities that could lead to improvements in the system.

The IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee, will develop a state and regional cross-agency benchmark report for stakeholders and the general public; and the Interagency Technical Assistance Team will build on the findings to: provide additional regional planning data and tools to further support regional planning to align education, workforce and economic development. Furthermore, the Interagency Technical Assistance Team will build upon existing agency initiatives to develop and use strategic indicators and benchmarks as part of comprehensive data resources for state and regional planning.

iv. Describe the State's plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2))

One significant challenge in Illinois is that no mechanism currently exists to allow all core program partners to track participant exits across all programs. Partners established a common vision and built the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) with data-sharing agreements with universities and others to ensure consistently high levels of quality, reliability and security in matching and managing participant-level data across agency and university partners. The LDS Agencies and the Governing Board have made substantial progress on activities that relate to the LDS Functions in 2014-15. ICCB is in the process of amending the ILDS agreement to include Adult Education microdata. ICCB and the ILDS Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator (NIU Center for Governmental Studies) have identified the next cycle of identity resolution for inclusion of Adult Education microdata.

B. Assessment of Participants' Post-program Success

Performance experts from the WIOA core and required partners will continue to work with the Illinois Department of Innovation Technology to connect data systems that will allow the state to assess the progress of participants that exit the program and continue on with education programs and enter employment. This cross-agency workgroup is exploring the development of a common information system using the existing Illinois Framework for Healthcare and Human Services. Ongoing discussions include the possibility of adapting that framework for WIOA purposes, including tracking participant exits from all programs. Two additional initiatives that

will support this effort are the *Longitudinal Data System* and the *Work Readiness Through Apprenticeship and Pathways*.

- Partners established a common vision and built the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) with data-sharing agreements with universities and others to ensure consistently high levels of quality, reliability and security in matching and managing participant-level data across agency and university partners. The ILDS Agencies and the Governing Board have made substantial progress on activities that relate to the ILDS Functions. As detailed in this Section, this progress includes:
 - Development and adoption of the Initial Annual Report and Plan;
 - A number of intra-agency enhancements that support the broader LDS effort;
 - The selection and establishment of the Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator; and
 - Significant work and accomplishments in the end-user service priorities established by the Governing Board.
- Illinois Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) improved the linkages between education, workforce development and human services data systems that build upon current education state longitudinal data system initiatives through a common identifier system and data quality and security framework and shared applications.

The IWIB’s Evaluation and Accountability Committee (now the CIC) began meeting in early 2018. As they implement certain provisions of the IWIB’s Strategic Plan related to evaluations, assessments, performance, and accountability, they will be looking at opportunities for continuous improvement throughout the workforce and education systems. One measure they may consider after further discussion is the long-term employment of participants exiting the program. While current common performance measures track customers up to four quarters after exit, the IWIB may want to utilize available and new data to determine employment outcomes beyond one year. These might include employment within the same company, within the field of study or the wages of the customer for as many as five years after employment.

C. Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data

The Illinois Department of Employment Security will provide reporting for three employment-related performance indicators (employment rate in the second and fourth quarters after exit and median earnings in the second quarter after exit), status in unsubsidized employment and quarterly earnings through direct Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage match. Under “Effectiveness in Serving Employers” the State has selected the measures of “Retention with the same employer” and “Employer Penetration Rate.” Employment Security will report performance data for Retention by providing (UI) wage match keeping in mind that this is a shared outcome across all six core programs within the State and will be a combined reporting measure. Wage records will identify a participant’s employment using an establishment identifier – FEIN for example. The Employer Penetration Rate will be determined by each core provider tracking of the number of

establishments served within a program year, and the State will collect that data and compare it to the aggregate number of employers in a given State and/or county.

D. Privacy Safeguards

Privacy Safeguards are incorporated into the Workforce Development System. Continuing to comply with federal and state laws governing protection of personally identifiable information is a priority during WIOA implementation. Existing privacy safeguards in administering the core programs in Illinois pose opportunities for additional collaboration and interoperability, while efforts also exist to ensure security systems and procedures do not inhibit service integration.

For instance, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) maintains student data related to high school equivalency exams. Any entities outside of the community college board system submit forms to ICCB staff focused on data accountability to ensure compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 USC § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), which protects the privacy of student education records. Future considerations include how data integration between required programs can facilitate a smooth transition from high school to the workforce or to post-secondary education while preserving the privacy of their records throughout the workforce system.

The Department of Employment Security's (Employment Security) existing system could also serve as a model for cross-agency collaboration. The Labor Exchange Program is a password-protected program backed by a user agreement, including an explanation of how individual data will be used throughout service delivery. Internal communications through the program use a unique participant identification number rather than a Social Security number. The unique identification number could be used across required programs to help preserve privacy and facilitate tracking of that participant by core program partners.

III. b. 7. Priority of Service for Veterans

Illinois places a priority in serving veterans located throughout the state. Veterans and covered persons will receive priority of service in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act codified at Section 4215 of 38 USC. The Comprehensive One-Stop Centers are committed to helping veterans find a job. Illinois veterans have been served over the years through targeted programs administered through the Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) and the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs in cooperation with other education and workforce agencies.

In Illinois, Employment Security serves as the lead agency for veteran's employment and employer services. The Illinois Department of Employment Security's Job for Veterans State Grant Plan incorporates and aligns with the Illinois Unified State Plan. All veterans, regardless of their characterization of discharge, are provided employment services by Wagner-Peyser staff, using the Veterans triage process. All Veterans coming into the American Job Centers must receive an Initial Assessment from either an Employment Specialist or WIOA staff. If during this Initial Assessment, a Veteran self-identifies as having a Significant Barrier to Employment (per [Veterans Program Letter](#) 03-14 with changes 1, 2, and 3), then they are referred to the Disabled Veterans

Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist for Individualized Career Services and Case Management. While receiving services from the DVOP specialist a Veteran may continue to receive Basic Career Services from both the Employment Services Specialist and WIOA staff. Once the Veteran’s significant barriers to employment have been mitigated and they are job-ready, the DVOP specialist will work in partnership with the Local Veterans Employment Representative to develop job opportunities within the Veterans’ chosen career field. As a member of the agency’s Business Services Team, the Local Veterans Employment Representative advocates for all Veterans with Businesses and Business Groups within the American Job Center’s operational area. The Local Veterans Employment Representative can assist any American Job Center staff member working with an eligible Veteran / covered person to develop job opportunities.

Program Year 2019 Veterans Performance Goals Baseline

	Negotiated Baseline
JVSG Staff Performance Measures	
Employment Rate – 2 nd Quarter after Exit	53.0%
Employment Rate – 4 th Quarter after Exit	54.0%
Median Earnings – 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$5,600
Wagner-Peyser Staff Services to Veterans Measures	
Employment Rate – 2 nd Quarter after Exit	59.0%
Employment Rate – 4 th Quarter after Exit	59.0%
Median Earnings – 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$6,766

Table 20: Employment Status of Illinois' Civilian Non-institutional Population 18 Years and Over by Veteran Status

January 2018-December 2018 (based on CPS) (Numbers in thousands)

	Civilian Non-Institutional	Civilian Labor Force					Not in the Labor Force
		Total	Percent of Population in Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	
			Total	Total	Total		
Veterans	574.8	274.8	47.8	265.8	9.1	3.3	300
Gulf War Era (I & II) Veterans	168.7	142.5	84.5	139	3.5	2.5	26.2
Gulf War I Veterans	75.6	65.8	87.1	65.1	0.7	1.1	9.8
Gulf War II Veterans	93.1	76.6	82.3	73.8	2.8	3.7	16.4
Non-Veterans	9082.5	6097.7	67.1	5847.8	249.9	4.1	2984.8

Source: UNITED STATES Census Bureau, Current Population Survey

DVOP specialists provide employment assistance to all Chapter 31 Referred Veterans - U.S. Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment to include Labor Market Information and Individualized Career Services. For those Veterans that are not eligible for VA-VR&E services or may need more specific state-level assistance, the DVOP specialist may refer Veterans to the IDHS-Division of Rehabilitation Services to assess and assist the veteran with mitigating his or her disability in order to meet their employment goal. DVOPs also work closely with other core and required partners, as well as community supportive service organizations, to help veterans receive various supportive assistance, training and certification credentials. Some of the highlighted programs serving veterans in Illinois include:

- IllinoisJobLink.com - Illinois Labor Exchange, an online tool used by veterans searching for jobs in Illinois, provides Veteran Preference by notifying the veteran job seeker of a job opening 24-48 hours before a non-veteran. This system also signifies the person is being a veteran by placing an American flag next to their name.

- Illinois Joining Forces Foundation - Statewide public and private organizational network that works to identify, collaborate and marshal available resources and services to create efficient access and delivery of these programs to the state's military and veteran communities. One of the main objectives is to provide a network of organizations with improved capacity, awareness and intra-network referrals.
- Reemployment Services (RES) - RES is a joint effort with the Unemployment Insurance (UI) profiling program that provides certain profiled claimants with reemployment workshops. These workshops train claimants on interviewing techniques, provide job search instructions and explain the many employment services and resources available.
- Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP) - IVTP offers Illinois' incarcerated veterans employment services during and after confinement.

Nine DVOP specialists comprise the IVTP Team Leads that provide quarterly employment-focused workshops in 15 Illinois correctional facilities. Employment Security partners with the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) and the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) to coordinate employment workshops for eligible Veterans within 18 months of their maximum release date. Emphasis is placed on job search techniques and resources to help these veterans address the unique employment barriers and other obstacles they may face in order to set them up for successful re-entry into the workforce and communities after their release.

Both DVOP and LVER staff conduct quarterly capacity building workshops to all One-Stop Partners, focusing on tools and updates to get our Veterans hired. These quarterly capacity building workshops provide a platform for all one-stop partners to train and educate each other on what they do to support/promote the provision of services or training programs to qualified veterans.

The State of Illinois has issued policy addressing the priority of services requirement in serving eligible veterans and eligible spouses at the one-stop centers. It requires that one-stop center staff appropriately identify customers at the point of entry who meet the priority in accordance with state and locally developed and implemented policies and processes. These policies address the provision of services regardless of the method of receipt, whether it be in a physical location or through technology. In compliance with Federal guidance, state policy details the appropriate priority decision-making that considers the eligibility criteria for enrolling and serving participants.

III. b. 8. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities

Illinois is committed to ensuring both programmatic and physical accessibility to the one-stop delivery system by maintaining compliance with WIOA Section 188, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and all other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. Compliance monitoring is conducted at the state and local level to make certain that all comprehensive one-stop facilities, programs, services, technology and materials are accessible and available (Attachment P)

<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20P%20-%20One-stop%20Center%20Accessibility%20Compliance%20Checklist%202020.pdf>). These services must be provided “on-demand” and in “near real time” in the physical comprehensive one-stop center location or via technology consistent with the “direct linkage” requirement defined in WIOA.

Illinois is a designated “Employment First” state, demonstrating its commitment to ensuring employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred option for people with disabilities. Physical and programmatic accessibility in the one-stop delivery system is essential to achieving this vision. To that end, Illinois places a high priority on creating strategies that provide seamless access to employment and training services within a universal environment.

In 2017, the Illinois Task Force on Employment and Economic Opportunity for Persons with Disabilities (EEOPD) completed its final recommendations in the areas of workforce development, employment, transition services to youth and provider transformation. In February 2018 the task force co-chairs provided testimony to a joint House-Senate committee charged with reviewing the recommendations in consideration of possible future legislation. Since 2019, EEOPD has been given additional responsibilities through state laws focusing on employment for people with disabilities. This includes reporting on implementation of a training program for state employees with disabilities (PA 100-0533), assisting in development of a customized employment system (PA 101-0368) and assuming the responsibilities of the Interagency Coordinating Council for transition of youth with disabilities (PA 100-0866).

Illinois has also developed an Employment First Interagency Council coordinated by the Department of Human Services and which includes representatives of state agencies serving people with disabilities. A key focus is coordinating joint efforts and promoting training and development for staff of state agencies, as well as community providers.

Beginning on January 3, 2019, each recipient must now also record the limited English proficiency (LEP) and the preferred language of each applicant, registrant, participant and terminnee (29 CFR 38.41-38.45). To that end, the Department of Commerce Office of Equal Opportunity Monitoring and Compliance (EOMC) continues to clarify which documents are “vital” and thus require translation into languages spoken by a significant number or portion of the population eligible to be served or likely to be encountered. The rule requires recipients to record the limited English proficiency and preferred language of applicants who seek to participate in the workforce development system to help ensure they have the necessary information to serve individuals with LEP effectively. Each recipient must also maintain, and submit to USDOL CRC upon request, a log of complaints filed with the recipient that alleges discrimination. Factors for discrimination are on the basis(es) of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation or belief, citizenship, and/or participation in a WIOA Title I—financially assisted program or activity. To achieve this objective, EOMC continues to educate LWIAs during continuous training seminars on promising practices to help recipients comply with their legal obligations and includes the components of a plan to facilitate meaningful access for individuals with limited English proficiency.

With increased provisions to provide universal access throughout the workforce system, annual monitoring of all recipients has been enacted to give assurances that recipients are complying with all nondiscriminatory requirements of the law. Nondiscrimination Plans must now include copies of monitoring reviews for submission to USDOL CRC during their review schedule. These reports will consist of findings, as well as corrective actions taken to ensure recipients of WIOA funding adhere to the assurance clauses of their contracts. Due to this yearly mandate, EOMC has recently hired a new, Spanish-speaking employee to work out of the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago, Illinois. This new position will help to monitor the largest recipient in Illinois and to provide a more visible structure to EOMC's monitoring role.

Another significant role in ensuring the physical and programmatic accessibility is the IWIB's One-Stop Center Certification policy discussed in the State Operating Systems and Policies portion of the Unified Plan. The certification criteria specified by the IWIB to evaluate the Comprehensive One-Stop Center's programmatic accessibility ensures equal access to all required programs, services, and activities to eligible participants and employers regardless of their range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, intelligence or education level. Services must be made available without unlawful discrimination. Primary criteria include equal access to career services, equal access to program services, direct linkage and reasonable accommodations. The indoor space is evaluated to make sure there is "equal and meaningful" access to programs for individuals with disabilities. Examples include computer accessibility, ergonomic set-up, screen-reading software programs (JAWS and DRAGON) and access to interpreters.

In addition to the role of the EOMC, the state has participated in or funded initiatives through the one-stop system that expand access to services for individuals with disabilities and that focus on developing relationships by leveraging resources and enhancing employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Opportunity Youth are participating in sector-based training such as Information Technology through a connection between the school district and the one-stop system to make their existing "career pathways" systems fully inclusive of and accessible to individuals with disabilities. A significant improvement in this pilot is the development of an Individualized Career Development Plan (ICDP). The ICDP provides an overview of planned experiences for students participating in secondary school beginning at age 14½, or upon entry to high school. It also aligns with the Illinois Individualized Education Program (IEP) Transition Plan and Summary of Performance components to alleviate duplication of document development for students with disabilities and to provide comprehensive information about goals and avenues for meeting post-high school goals. It is important to note that the ICDP is a result of discussions between the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and DCEO. Furthermore, ISBE adopted the ICDP for use by special education programs.

Finally, staff training is integral to making sure all services are programmatically and physically accessible. The state has hosted a series of webinar events that include updated provisions on WIOA Section 188, technical assistance provided by Diversity Partners project on leveraging business relations to benefit job seekers with disabilities, and the requirements of Comprehensive One-Stop Center certification. Additionally, the state has and will continue to conduct summits that provide best practices for serving individuals with disabilities.

The Departments of Commerce and Employment Security developed an agreement to better align the ADA monitoring process of American Job Centers. This agreement will allow for better alignment of office inspection timing and for improved cross-agency communication regarding inspection findings. In facilities where both Title III and Title IB staff are located, DCEO will conduct the ADA inspections in order to avoid duplication of services and better align findings and related reports. DCEO will provide IDES with the ADA inspection report after the inspection has been completed. If IDES is the leaseholder, IDES will then work with Central Management Services and/or the landlord to correct any findings.

III. b. 9. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals who are English Language Learners

In Illinois, there is a great need for interpreters due to limited English proficiency in many portions of the state. Staff members are trained to ensure that an interpreter is provided in these situations “in real time” to meet the needs of English Language Learners. The State of Illinois has a master contract with an interpreting service provider to offer these services to assist English Language Learners.

Adult Education and Literacy is the key education program in the state that provides English language instruction. These services will be coordinated within the one-stop delivery system. ICCB English language programs provide instruction to approximately 36,000 students annually. This instruction includes services to adults 16 years and over to achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language.

Adult Education programs provide instruction designed to assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners to acquire an understanding of the American System of Government, individual freedom, and the responsibility of citizenship. In addition, Adult Education English language programs provide instruction in civics education, workforce readiness, bridge programs, and Integrated Education and Training to English Language Learners at varying educational functioning levels. Adult Education has recently expanded online instructional efforts to connect more students to English language activities. In addition, the Integrated Education Literacy and Civics Education (IEL/CE) activities are being expanded to include more instruction offered concurrently in English language instruction, Workforce Preparation, Civics Education, and concurrently Integrated Education and Training. ICCB Adult Education has also developed an IEL/CE toolkit that will assist programs in the development of these instruction offerings. Training for this activity is provided through the Professional Development Network. Additionally, as stated previously, WIOA Title I and Adult Education will partner within the one-stop center resource rooms to provide an online digital solution for language learning.

One of EOMC’s most essential ongoing goals is to ensure access to all. By working with the LWIAs, EOMC has outlined strategies to prevent discrimination based on national origin by failing to provide language services to someone with limited English proficiency. As such, under the new rules, recipients must take reasonable steps to ensure that individuals with LEP have meaningful access to aid, benefits, services and training. Together with Central Management

Services (CMS), EOMC has secured language transcription and translation services that are utilized statewide with the assistance from contracts executed by the Governor's Office. Since 2014, Multilingual Connections holds the Translation and Interpretation Services Master Contract (CMS4819290). Under this contract, Multilingual Connections provides the written translation, audio transcription and in-person interpretation services in dozens of languages. Together, with Propio Language Services, another DoIT communication contract that provides language interpreter services, EOMC can include oral interpretation and written translation of both hard-copy and electronic materials in non-English languages. This service ensures that individuals with LEP are informed about or able to participate in covered programs or activities.

Expanding access to information on employment opportunities and workforce development services is pivotal. The Illinois workNet portal consolidates resources for job seekers and businesses into one online forum that provides career, education, and work support information. Illinois workNet is designed to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their level of English proficiency, can access workforce services through the portal. Toward this effort, workNet has incorporated Spanish language content. Specifically, local and state content published in Spanish with a language switcher link is available to toggle between Spanish and English pages. The Spanish site provides the model to allow information in additional languages with minimal effort.

Beginning January 3, 2019, DCEO enacted policy changes to implement data collection by preferred language (WIOA Notice No. 18-NOT-02). This policy requires service providers to record the preferred language of applicants who seek to participate in the workforce development system to help ensure they have the necessary information to serve LEP individuals as effectively as English-speaking applicants. The Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS) has been modified to capture LEP data for recipients to be compliant with this mandate.

By utilizing this front-end approach to language determination, diverse non-English speaking participants will have meaningful access to aid, benefits, services, and training by utilizing the language of choice as administered during applicant inquiry. Breaking down the communication barriers ensures that individuals with LEP are informed about and able to participate in covered programs or activities. EOMC continues to clarify which documents are "vital" and thus must be translated into languages spoken by a significant number or portion of the population eligible to be served or likely to be encountered.

Beginning on January 3, 2019, each recipient must also record the limited English proficiency and preferred language of each applicant, registrant, participant, and terminée (29 CFR 38.41-38.45). To that end, EOMC continues to clarify which documents are "vital" and thus must be translated into languages spoken by a significant number or portion of the population eligible to be served or likely to be encountered. USDOL CRC has identified and required vital information be offered in the most prevalent languages spoken by a significant number or portion of the population eligible to be served and/or likely to be encountered. EOMC reserves the right to add additional languages as appropriate and has adopted the following list of specific languages as follows: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, French Creole, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

EOMC continues to educate LWIA's during continuous training seminars on the promising practices to help recipients comply with their legal obligations and includes the components of a plan to facilitate meaningful access for individuals with limited English proficiency. With these increased provisions to provide universal access throughout the workforce system, annual on-site monitoring of all recipients was enacted to provide assurances that recipients are complying with all nondiscriminatory provisions of the law.

Copies of all monitoring reviews are submitted to USDOL CRC during their review schedule. These reports will include findings, as well as corrective actions taken to ensure recipients of WIOA funding adhere to the assurance clauses of their contracts. Affirmative outreach efforts are also discussed and reviewed as part of the annual monitoring process at each LWIA. If EOMC determines there is insufficient outreach being performed (either through monitoring or data analysis review), the LWIA is required to complete a corrective action plan detailing how they will improve their efforts to attract the under-represented group(s).

IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs

The plan development process has evolved in Illinois. When the original WIOA Unified State Plan was submitted, few of the currently existing cross-program groups existed. The plan was jointly drafted by representatives from each core partner and sent to the IWIB for approval. In 2020, Illinois has the advantage of using now well-established cross-program groups created by the IWIB and State agency directors to provide and review plan content and serve as sounding boards to ensure the IWIB's vision is faithfully rendered in the plan. For the 2020 Unified State Plan, the IWIB established a team of over twenty individuals that includes: the IWIB business co-chair, members of the IWIB Executive Committee, IWIB staff, and staff from the core partners and representatives from other related agencies, such as the State Board of Education, and the Illinois Workforce Partnership, a group comprised of local workforce area leaders. The team used an online collaborative editing process involving all partners. This method of plan development allows for more robust and coordinated drafting and editing of new content while also being much more efficient.

With regard to cross-agency planning for program implementation, Illinois is poised to take another leap forward. With the February 2018 release of the IWIB Strategic Plan, the board established multiple working groups comprised of IWIB members and program partner staff. These subject matter expert groups were formed to provide board-level leadership on WIOA implementation issues such as: 1) system evaluation; 2) training provider eligibility; 3) one-stop certification; and 4) cross-agency service integration. These groups are providing system leadership coordinated through the IWIB and its standing committees, task forces and work groups.

In addition, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), in partnership with the Department of Commerce, completed the development of the Workforce Education Strategic Plan. This work included a collaboration of state partners, stakeholders and businesses. This partnership continues in the implementation phase, and the plan aligns with the IWIB Strategic Plan, the Unified Plan, and the Governor's Economic Development Plan respectively. The plan addresses early career-

related education and exposure, essential and occupational skills gaps, alignment of education and training programs that meet employer needs and strengthening connections and alignment among public partners and engagement with business.

Also, on January 31, 2018, the ICCB submitted an Adult Education Strategic Plan to the Governor and General Assembly. The ICCB engaged state agencies, including core and required partners, legislative, adult education, community colleges, philanthropic, community-based organization, LEAs and other stakeholders in the development of this Strategic Plan. The plan, titled “Expanding Career Pathway Opportunities in Adult Education,” aligns with goals set forth in key state-driven workforce and career pathway plans. The plan addresses several guiding principles, goals and objectives. The goals of the plan include: scaling effective models and strategies, postsecondary transition and credential attainment, college and career readiness and developing lifelong career pathway systems and integrating enabling technologies.

WIOA Implementation & Coordination

Under WIOA, the Illinois Workforce System began an evolutionary process that has already begun to accelerate. This evolution is grounded in a new emphasis on inter-agency collaboration, data-driven strategies and continuous improvement through rigorous, ongoing analysis and evaluation. One of the state’s immediate activities after the launch of WIOA was to foster improved communication and collaboration between core partners and other key stakeholders to establish a solid foundation for service integration. The following are representative examples of workforce development activities undertaken or planned.

Interagency Technical Assistance Team (TA Team)

This group of top program administrators began meeting in May 2015 and continues to meet monthly. All meetings are supported by highly structured agendas designed to maintain clarity at the state-level regarding integration and alignment under WIOA. The major accomplishments of members of this group, collectively or partially, through 2019 include:

- Participating in a coordinated process for review of the WIOA Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Final Rule, a key purpose of which was to identify issues, requirements and opportunities of common interest and concern;
- Reaching an agreement on the specific career services and workforce programs and activities each required partner will make available at Comprehensive One-Stop Centers throughout Illinois, including the full configuration of workforce service delivery through one-stops in Illinois;
- Working collaboratively to coordinate the different methods that will be used to deliver these services, including delivery through technology that meets the “direct linkage” requirements of WIOA;
- Providing state-level input into policies guiding the local implementation of governance provisions, such as the initial designation of “Local Workforce Innovation Areas” (Attachment L)

<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20L%20-%20Local%20Workforce%20Area%20Designation.pdf>);

- Jointly participating in strategy development for defining the number and location of Comprehensive One-Stop Centers in Illinois;
- Concurring on a general framework for cost-sharing under WIOA, including a framework for sharing one-stop center infrastructure costs;
- Establishing an interagency task force to focus on operational details and mechanisms associated with local and state infrastructure cost funding under WIOA;
- Identifying initial elements to be included in the Governor’s Guidelines for One-Stop MOU Development (Attachment J - <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/DownloadPrint/Governor's%20Guidelines%20-%20Revision%204%20-%20Final.pdf>) providing direction and support regarding negotiations of program partners at the state and local levels. The Governor’s Guidelines have since been revised four times, with the latest revision issued in November 2019;
- Working as part of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) Policy Workgroup on One-Stop Certification to provide input regarding the criteria and process to be used for certification of Comprehensive One-Stop Centers;
- Participating in the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) Policy Workgroup on Service Integration to provide input regarding the criteria and process to be used for assessing levels of integration in the local one-stop systems;
- Development of a budget reconciliation handbook for use as a resource for local areas to understand and carry out the MOU budget reconciliation process. Webinar trainings were also held for individuals in local areas; and
- Issuing regular regional and local planning, as well as MOU, guidance and conducting State-level reviews of these plans and MOUs.

In 2018, the Interagency Work Group evolved into two cross-program entities: 1) a core partner senior leadership team (meeting quarterly), and 2) a program implementation technical assistance group (meeting monthly). The Executive Leadership Team provides the opportunity for direct interaction between core partner senior leadership to ensure their programs continue improving outcomes for clients and businesses. The program implementation group, the Interagency Technical Assistance Team referenced throughout the plan, continues providing: technical assistance to local staff to troubleshoot and resolve issues, identification of promising practices, proposing local procedure refinements, recommendations for policy changes as needed to the policy staff residing in each core partner, developing regional and local planning guidance, developing the Governor’s Guidelines for one-stop MOUs, review and approval of plans and MOUs. This team works with all local workforce areas and all one-stop required partners on an as-needed basis to resolve issues as they arise.

Economic Information and Analysis

The Department of Employment Security provides statewide and sub-state occupational employment projections, so the local workforce areas, along with other partners, can determine in-demand occupations and education partners can plan education and training curricula. The Interagency Technical Assistance Team established an Interagency Data Team to develop comprehensive data reports used in the state and regional plans. The Data Team will continue to work with the regional planning teams to provide additional data as needed. For the regions to be able to access labor market information that is specifically tied to the WIOA regional plans, the team posts a region-specific data packet online at the Illinois workNet portal. The Data Team also provides an overview of regional data via statewide webinar and offers one-on-one technical assistance to regional planning teams.

Currently, Employment Security provides labor market information on the Employment Security website in a variety of formats including the Illinois Virtual Labor Market Information System (VLMI) that is supported by the DOL Workforce Information Grant and that is a required deliverable for all states. Commerce includes this data in its new Illinois Employment Business Systems (IEBS) online business intelligence app which has undergone beta testing throughout 2019. This app marries company data from Dun & Bradstreet, layoff notices, labor market information including Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages data on changes in employment and industry location quotients.

Staff from the core WIOA partners also worked on a proof-of-concept pilot project to analyze outcomes for certain community college program completers. This attempt at talent flow analysis led to a successful evaluation of where graduates found employment and identified wage differentials based on industry and locale and was added to the online case study library for the US Chamber of Commerce Talent Pipeline Management initiative.

Workforce Education Strategic Planning

The ICCB worked with state and local partners in the development of a statewide Workforce Education Strategic Plan (WESP). DCEO contributed Title I funds to support the planning development process. Eleven regional forums were held in the 10 economic development regions in the spring of 2015. Initial employment and education data was used to identify the trends, as well as the supply/demand opportunities in each region of the state. The ICCB continued the development of the WESP in the spring of 2016. The WESP was approved by the ICCB in June of 2017 and work continues to implement the strategies at the community college level. At the fall 2017 Illinois WIOA Summit, the lead agencies for both the WESP and the Unified State Plan shared with the audience how the plans align. ICCB continues to work with the community colleges to gather information on the practices that address the four strategic directions and will share that information as it becomes available.

The information gathered through these education planning meetings was used to inform WIOA state and regional planning efforts (which began in the fall of 2015). Following regional and statewide partner planning events that concluded in 2016, the ICCB – in partnership with community colleges, businesses and the core and required partners – continued collaborating to

develop strategies in four overarching content areas for recommendation to the state's community college system. These four content areas include:

- Strategic Direction 1: Increase Early Career-Related Education and Exposure
- Strategic Direction 2: Address Essential and Occupational Skill Gaps
- Strategic Direction 3: Align Education and Training Programs to Employers' Needs
- Strategic Direction 4: Strengthen Connections among Public Partners and Engagement and Alignment with Business

Program-specific Requirements for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B

a. 1. A. Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State

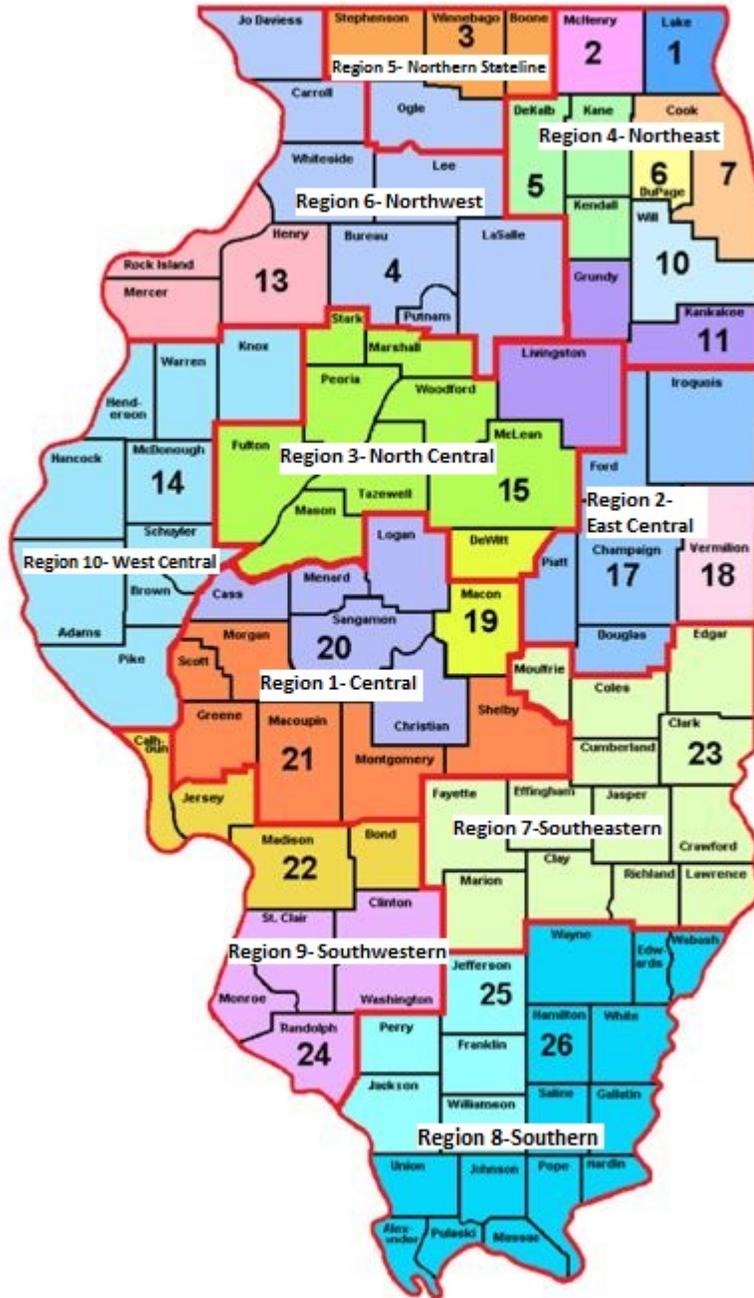
For purposes of WIOA, the 102 counties in Illinois are grouped into ten Economic Development Regions (EDR) and twenty-two (22) Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIA). The regions range from a relatively compact four counties in the Northern Stateline region to the much larger nineteen (19) county Southern region.

The 22 LWIAs range from six (6) single-county LWIAs to an area with 14 counties. All but one of the single-county LWIAs are located in the Northeastern Economic Development Region that covers the greater Chicagoland area. There are a small number of instances where the EDRs cross LWIA boundaries. The Governor designated ten EDRs that are also used for the purposes of alignment with workforce development. Here is a list of counties in each region:

- Region 1 (Central (12 counties)) - Cass, Christian, Greene, Logan, Macon, Macoupin, Menard, Montgomery, Morgan, Sangamon, Scott, Shelby Counties.
- Region 2 (East Central (6 counties)) - Champaign, Douglas, Ford, Iroquois, Piatt, Vermilion Counties.
- Region 3 (North Central (10 counties)) - De Witt, Fulton, Livingston, Mc Lean, Marshall, Mason, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, Woodford Counties.
- Region 4 (Northeast (10 counties)) - Cook, De Kalb, Du Page, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, Mc Henry, Will Counties.
- Region 5 (Northern Stateline (4 counties)) - Boone, Ogle, Stephenson, Winnebago Counties.
- Region 6 (Northwest (10 counties)) - Bureau, Carroll, Henry, Jo Daviess, La Salle, Lee, Mercer, Putnam, Rock Island, Whiteside Counties.
- Region 7 (Southeastern (13 counties)) - Clark, Clay, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, Edgar, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, Lawrence, Marion, Moultrie, Richland Counties.
- Region 8 (Southern (19 counties)) - Alexander, Edwards, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Massac, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Saline, Union, Wabash, Wayne, White, Williamson Counties.
- Region 9 (Southwestern (9 counties)) - Bond, Calhoun, Clinton, Jersey, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair, Washington Counties.
- Region 10 (West Central (9 counties)) - Adams, Brown, Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, Pike, Schuyler, Warren Counties.

The current LWIA boundaries trace their origins back to the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act program of the 1970s. Through the transitions to the Job Training to the Job

Training Partnership Act, Workforce Investment Act and now WIOA, the LWIA boundaries remained largely unchanged, save for the consolidations mentioned previously.



The Governor established ten Economic Development Regions (EDR) in 2003 based on contemporary economic data. These regional boundaries were reexamined in 2015 and 2017 and 2018 based on the latest economic data and were found to generally still be valid. While the EDR boundaries largely follow the pre-existing LWIA structure, the overlay is not 100 percent and

there are a handful of outlier counties that cause their LWIA to cross into another EDR. These counties are: DeWitt, Ogle and Livingston.

Throughout 2018 and early 2019, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) used updated labor-market information provided by the Department of Employment Security (IDES) to facilitate local negotiations for realigning selected outlier counties between four local workforce areas. Effective July 1, 2019, Calhoun and Jersey counties transitioned from LWIA 21 to LWIA 22; and Douglas county transitioned from LWIA 23 to LWIA 17.

The State is requesting a waiver, described further later in this section, to extend the deadline for bringing all LWIA boundaries into full alignment with the EDRs.

a. 1. B. Describe the process used for designating local areas, including procedures for determining whether the local area met the criteria for “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” in accordance with 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA. Describe the process used for identifying regions and planning regions under section 106(a) of WIOA. This must include a description of how the State consulted with the local boards and chief elected officials in identifying the regions

Procedures for Determining if Local Areas Met the Criteria for “Performed Successfully”

Illinois issued the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Transition Policy 1 to address the initial designation of local areas as required by WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) Number 27-14 that was issued by the United States Department of Labor (DOL). The process for designating Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIA) under WIOA was established by WIOA Transition Policy 1, issued on April 23, 2015 (*see Attachment L at <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20L%20-%20Local%20Workforce%20Area%20Designation.pdf>*). This policy letter describes conditions necessary for the Governor to approve a request to designate an area, defines “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” as required by the Act. “The term “performed successfully” used with respect to a local area, means 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, as in effect the day before the date of enactment of WIOA for each of the last two (2) consecutive years for which data are available preceding the determination of performance under this paragraph;” “The term “sustained fiscal integrity”, used with respect to a local area, means that the Secretary of Labor has not made a formal determination, during within of the last two (2) consecutive years preceding the determination regarding such integrity, that either the grant recipient or the administrative entity of the area misappropriated funds provided under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (as in effect prior to the effective date of WIOA subtitle B) due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration.” The conditions necessary for the governor to designate a local area as described in the policy letter are:

- The local area was designated under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 on or before July 1, 2012.

- The local area successfully met or exceeded adjusted performance requirements for core indicators under 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 local area did not receive a declaration of having failed to sustain fiscal integrity for the two prior program years by the Secretary of Labor.
- All county Chief Elected Officials (CEO) within a current LWIA, 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 majority (20 of 22) of the local workforce areas in Illinois met the criteria outlined in Section 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 WIOA.

Procedures for Determining if Local Areas Sustained Fiscal Integrity

In determining whether the grant recipient/administrative entity in the local area sustained fiscal integrity, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity reviewed the following for the two-year period immediately preceding Program Year 2015: 1) Formal determinations of disallowed costs and non-compliance as documented by reports of the results of the state's WIA/WIOA monitoring, single audits and DOL monitoring (if applicable); 2) Results of investigations of incident reports alleging gross negligence, fraud, abuse or other misconduct; and 3) Formal communication of high-risk status and/or suspension of cash payments resulting from continued violations of administrative requirements and grant terms and conditions and the subsequent corrective actions implemented by the local area to correct the violations. The implementation of the Illinois Grant Accountability and Transparency Act established standard pre-award, establishment and grant administration procedures across all state agencies. This added another set of tools to ensure grant recipients sustain fiscal integrity.

Process Used to Determine Regions and Planning Regions

Regional Planning Areas were designated to align with the state's ten Economic Development Regions (EDR). 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 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 and other economic factors.

As mentioned in the prior section, the state completed a new economic analysis in 2018 and the data confirmed this regional alignment is still appropriate. In early 2015, the Department collaborated with the Illinois Community College Board on creating a strategic plan for workforce and education. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) and the Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) made the local areas and community college districts aware the data indicated the EDRs 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*

O at <http://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20O%20-%20Regional%20Planning%20Data%202020.pdf>). To promote continuity from the ICCB planning, these data packets were also being used by WIOA regional planning teams. Updated data packets were prepared by the State Interagency Data Team in tandem with the research for the 2020 Unified State Plan and distributed to regional planning teams.

a. 1. C. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA 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. The policy also describes conditions under which the governor may approve a request for initial designation as a local workforce development area under WIOA from any area that was designated as a local area under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, but failed to meet all the aforementioned requirements; and conditions under which the governor may also designate a local workforce development area upon the request of the State Workforce Development Board. Furthermore, the policy describes the appeals process that may be used should a local area disagree with the Governor's determination and provides an application form to be filed by local area CEOs. Local areas may appeal to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board, which has 60 days to render a decision. If a decision has not been made by that time or if the appeal does not result in a designation, the entity may appeal to the Secretary of Labor. There were no local workforce areas that appealed the Governor's decision regarding initial designation.

a. 1. D. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA 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 J* (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/DownloadPrint/Governor's%20Guidelines%20-%20Revision%204%20-%20Final.pdf>). The appeals process is mentioned in Section 6 and Item 12 in the Glossary.

Local areas may appeal the governor's determination on the sharing of one-stop infrastructure costs on the basis that the determination is inconsistent with federal proportionate share requirements or the federal cost contribution caps. The appeal must be made within 21 days of the governor's determination. Any appeal under this section is to be filed with the Interagency Technical Assistance Team, which has thirty days to rule on the appeal. Should the plaintiff wish, the local area CEO(s) may appeal the decision of the Interagency Technical Assistance Team to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board. The Board has thirty days to either hear the

appeal and render a decision or inform the plaintiff of its decision to not hear the appeal. In instances where the Board refuses to hear the appeal the determination of the Interagency Technical Assistance Team stands.

a. 2. A. 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 and Trade Adjustment Assistance Training programs. As administrator, Commerce issues policy guidance through its series of policy letters and notices that are posted on the Illinois workNet portal (<https://apps.il-work-net.com/WIOAPolicy/Policy/Home>). Commerce has issued guidance on the implementation and administration of WIOA for the following activities:

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

More specifically, the following policies have been developed and issued through Commerce's Office of Employment and Training (OET):

- Guidance was issued to provide the Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIB), Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIA), core partner programs, service and training providers, sub-grantees and other interested parties with an overview of the implementation steps Commerce, primarily through OET, has taken to implement the provisions of WIOA. This insured a seamless transition for the customers during intake and the continued provision of career and training services, including the expanded training services described in WIOA. This guidance also addressed reporting requirements during and after the transition period as changes to the workforce data reporting system, Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS), is being updated
- Membership and certification of LWIBs under WIOA is governed under policies that are consistent with the new provisions including the assurance of more streamlined boards, but with a majority of business members and minimum percentage of labor and community service organizations represented. Emphasis was placed on ensuring the business representatives reflect the regional industry sectors, labor market information (LMI) and the diversity among populations. This policy provided new forms for completion for nominated applicants to the board, as well as reiterated the process for

appointees with fixed and staggered terms. Certification (and recertification) of the boards is conducted by OET only after a review of the requisite information on each local board member to ensure appropriate composition is maintained. This process further includes reviews of LWIB bylaws, and compliance with the Sunshine Provision and parliamentary procedures.

- Policy was implemented to address chief elected officials (CEO) in each LWIA to include an understanding of their required functions, which is confirmed through a CEO agreement signed by each CEO in the LWIA. The agreement further addresses those LWIAs that have multiple CEOs when there is more than one unit of general local government residing within the boundaries of the area. CEOs are given the authority as the local grant recipient, including the authority to designate local grant sub-recipients and fiscal agents for the Title IB funds of WIOA. It also defines each CEO's liability for WIOA funds determined to be misspent or used for unallowable purposes.
- Eligibility policies have been written to ensure all the requirements of WIOA are clearly outlined for the local areas and their staff providing the intake and registration of customers. ALL customers of the system, whether served by local one-stop staff, through technology, or self-served, are included in the general eligibility policy. Those seeking more than self-service assistance are then determined eligible based on the funding stream they will be served under including the youth, adult and dislocated worker populations. Detailed descriptions of the eligibility requirements and documentation sources allowed confirming such eligibility decisions provide guidance to the career planner in their decision making. The documentation is further outlined to determine low-income status, veteran or qualified spouse of a veteran status, and identity and employment eligibility. Priority of service is emphasized throughout to all population identified as priority of service within WIOA taking into account preference to veterans. A stand-alone priority of service policy will be created as equity goals discussed earlier in the plan are developed. Priority of service is also given for individualized career services and training services for adults who are either recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.
- WIOA policy was issued to provide guidance to all training providers (including new providers and those previously provided transitional eligibility) and the LWIB and LWIA on the process for determining eligibility of providers and training programs. Illinois has required LWIAs to develop and implement local policies as necessary. The policy includes initial and continued eligibility of all providers, with separate guidance for those Registered Apprenticeships choosing to be added to the eligible training provider list (ETPL). In limited instances, there are exceptions for when a training provider is not required to apply for eligibility determination by the local boards. In addition to the IWDS system which is the main intake point for applications of eligibility by training providers and for their training programs, the state's online workforce system, Illinois workNet, will maintain information on all eligible training providers and their programs, as well as performance information as it becomes available. This list highlights those programs that meet the state's requirements for in-demand occupations. The current procedures are currently under review by a work group to address the performance

collection requirements for all students, streamline the current approval process for eligibility, and make suggestions for changes to the reporting system.

- The IWIB approved procedures for communications between the board, its executive committee, and the Interagency Technical Assistance Team especially as they pertain to the continued implementation of WIOA. The State developed guidance and instructions regarding 1) Regional and Local Planning Requirements, 2) Governor’s Guidelines to State and Local Program Partners Negotiating Costs and Services under WIOA, and 3) Criteria and Procedures for Certifying Comprehensive One-Stop Centers under WIOA. The State issued policy and procedures for the procurement of the One-Stop Operator (OSO) as required by *Training and Employment Guidance Letter 15-16 (TEGL 15-16)*. The policy emphasizes the requirements of TEGL 15-16 and the contractual provisions in 2 CFR 200.318 through 200.326. Part of this requirement is for the LWIB and the selected *One-Stop Operator* to enter into a legally binding agreement which may take the form of a written contract or another type of agreement, such as a *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)* which is explained in the Competition Requirements section below. Following Illinois WIOA assessment, the State updated the OSO policy and procedures and conducted a monitoring review of all OSO Agreements.
- Under a work group structure, Illinois continues development of policy to address all the types of training services allowed under WIOA. The first of these training options was on-the-job training (OJT) for which recent policy was issued. General requirements for all OJTs outline the guidance for potential new employees or eligible underemployed workers that provide an opportunity for acquisition of new skills or knowledge essential to job performance. Eligibility of participants and employers, including apprenticeships, addresses the types of customers (job seeker, incumbent worker and business) allowed through OJT contracts. To ensure proper implementation, local workforce boards are required to set policy for OJTs. The employer reimbursement scale is detailed to both attract businesses and ensure they have a level of accountability to the training program and customer’s success. Monitoring and evaluation guidance assures further accountability. A comprehensive list of all WIOA policies and guidance issued is provided in *Attachment U* at <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20U%20-%20Policy%20Documents%202020.pdf>.
- The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is currently working with the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation to encourage LWIBs to include legal aid services as an allowable supportive service as outlined under § 680.900 and § 681.570 of the WIOA Final Rule into state policy. Legal aid can help support WIOA’s goals by expunging or sealing old criminal records; obtaining, reinstating revoked or suspended driver’s licenses; assisting with securing occupational licenses when a criminal record is a discretionary obstacle; untangling outstanding court debt issues; negotiating wage garnishments, such as for child support orders; securing certificates of rehabilitation for the formerly incarcerated; stabilizing lives by preventing illegal evictions, resolving credit report problems, or filing for domestic violence restraining orders; and assisting veterans with accessing healthcare, education grants, and housing services. The Ready-to-Work (“R2W”) Initiative is a “community redevelopment” project designed “to help individuals overcome legal barriers to getting and or keeping a job.” Under the initiative,

legal aid grantees partner with workforce development agencies to provide on-site intake and develop referral relationships to help job seekers address obstacles including criminal records, driver's license suspensions, wage theft, and related civil legal issues. As part of the Ready-to-Work initiative, legal aid groups (specifically Cabrini Green Legal Aid, LAF, Prairie State Legal Services, Land of Lincoln Legal Aid and Illinois Legal Aid Online) have forged partnerships with 12 workforce development agencies and 26 community-based programs across the state. Partners include the North Lawndale Employment Network, Jane Addams Resource Center, National ABLE (Pilsen & Chicago Heights), CARA, Growing Home, Man-Tra-Con, Madison County Employment & Training, Vermillion County Works, the Job Center of Lake County, and Illinois workNet Centers (Champaign & Peoria).

- Title IB ePolicy Chapter 6.1 titled *Annual Allocation and Modification Requirement of WIOA Formula Grant Funds* provides guidelines by which the Title IB Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) formula grants shall be established and modified. The State will provide additional guidance through an annual funding notice that includes information regarding the formula allocations and any additional guidance that is applicable to the program year funds.
- Title IB ePolicy Chapter 3.5 titled *Incentives and Sanctions for Performance* a required statewide activity policy related to the Title IB incentive bonus awards and sanctions associated with exceeding and failing negotiated performance standards. In addition, it provides the bonus incentive measures related to completion of training in a demand occupation and subsequent employment in that occupation.
- Title IB ePolicy Chapter 6.2.1 titled *Dislocated Worker Emergency Assistance Application* outlines a statewide Rapid Response policy to provide additional assistance to local areas that experience disasters, mass layoffs, or plant closings, or other events that precipitate substantial increases in the number of unemployed individuals, carried out in local areas by the State, working in conjunction with the local boards and the chief elected officials for the local areas.

a. 2. B. Describe how the State intends to use Governor's set aside funding. 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

Commerce works with the IWIB and core partners to implement the strategies and activities outlined in the Unified Plan. Governor's set aside funding will be used as appropriate and available for statewide initiatives that support the vision, principles, goals and strategies articulated within the WIOA Unified State Plan. Projects must also align with the priorities outlined in the Regional and Local Workforce Plans. There are four general categories of activity that Illinois will support with these funds.

Sector Partnership Projects

- Implement new or expanded local and regional sector-based partnerships that increase the workforce investment system's capacity to provide critical training that aligns with the needs of businesses and industries. Activities include regional planning and sector strategies that will align resources to address skills and other needs of in-demand industries. Regional planning and sector strategies support participants by assessing the regional economic landscape to identify new or growing employment opportunities in the region. They also help ensure that partnerships and regional assets from the workforce investment system, industry, community colleges, labor unions, nonprofits, and other stakeholders are aligned and integrated under strategies that can be used to respond to economic shocks, such as plant closings, natural disasters, and long-term unemployment within the regional workforce.

Innovative Workforce Pilot and Research Projects

- Implementing innovative programs and strategies designed to meet the needs of business, which may include incumbent worker training programs, customized training, sectoral and industry cluster strategies and implementation of industry or sector partnerships, career pathway programs, microenterprise and entrepreneurial training and 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 State and local businesses.
- Developing or identifying education and training programs that respond to real-time labor market analysis; that utilize direct assessment and prior learning assessment to measure and provide credit for prior knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences; that evaluate such skills and competencies for adaptability; that ensure credits are portable and stackable for more skilled employment and that accelerate course or credential completion.

Priority Population Projects

- Developing strategies for effectively serving individuals with barriers to employment and for coordinating programs and services among workforce partners. Projects may include, but are not limited to, the coordination 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 USC 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 USC 796d), programs funded under Part B of Chapter 1 of Title VII of such Act (29 USC 796e et seq.), and activities

carried out by centers for independent living, as defined in section 702 of such Act (29 USC796a);

- Adult education and literacy activities, including those provided by public libraries;
- Activities in the corrections system that assist returning citizens as they reenter the workforce;
- 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 re-enter and complete secondary education, enroll in postsecondary education and advanced training, progress through a career pathway, and enter unsubsidized employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency.

Statewide Technical Assistance and WIOA Implementation Projects

- Providing technical assistance to local boards, chief elected officials, one-stop operators, workforce partners, and eligible providers in local areas, such as: the development and training of staff, identification and development of exemplary program activities, and assistance in abandoning less effective or less efficient but well-entrenched practices.
- 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.

Layoff Aversion Strategies

Illinois has long believed the best layoff aversion strategy is prevention. Layoff aversion begins as soon as a company realizes it must adjust to remain competitive in its market. Such adjustments could be streamlining operations for improved productivity or taking advantage of a market opportunity to increase profitability. Often these operational adjustments require upskilling incumbent workers and/or access to new skilled workers. The challenge lies in being able to help businesses before it's too late.

To that end, OET staff developed and delivered a full-day workforce system training to the Department of Commerce Office of Business Development (BD). The training leverages BD front office and regional field staff connections and interactions with businesses to identify opportunities for early intervention of WIOA services. OET and BD staff concur that helping companies remain competitive is a high return-on-investment activity that directly impacts the ability of WIOA participants to obtain sustainable employment with options for upward mobility. To that end, our mutual goal is to help businesses access WIOA services and skilled workers so that they improve their competitive position and avoid the need for layoffs.

The specific goals met by this training are for Business Development staff to have a solid understanding of:

- workforce system core principles and key goals in the WIOA Unified State Plan
- basic WIOA program organizational structure
- career pathways
- sector strategies
- the relevance of business engagement with the workforce/education system
- WIOA core and required partner services and their relevance to businesses, especially work-based learning options
- regional data on leading, emerging and maturing industries
- gathering and using workforce intelligence
- communication strategies
- the importance of integrated, cross-program business services.

OET staff also briefed Business Development staff that operate the Department's First Stop business assistance hotline on WIOA services and how to connect businesses with the closest One-Stop. Over a dozen businesses were connected with their local One-Stop in the first month following that briefing.

Rapid Response Support for Layoff Aversion

The state of Illinois wants to prepare workers for careers. Helping workers find ways to refresh their skills and credentials to stay competitive gives those workers an advantage in the labor market over the long run. One promising and efficient way to refresh skills is through work-based learning opportunities. Sometimes, learning on the job can also save a worker from being laid off and, continue to contribute to the company's growth and success. Companies make decisions daily that may affect workers' employment status, including needing to downsize to remain competitive, eliminate jobs that are not needed anymore, or lay off workers when their skills are no longer relevant to the company's mission.

Proactive investments in layoff aversion benefit the state, businesses and workers by retaining jobs and helping workers pivot into a new role in the company or find employment quickly elsewhere. The programs funded previously were called Talent Pipeline Program grants. New funding opportunities will be available in 2020 and the new program name will be announced at that time (The state of Illinois also participates in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Talent Pipeline Management program and the label Talent Pipeline can be confusing to companies, job seekers and community-based organizations).

Programs generally address one or more of the activities listed below:

- projects connect talent strategies with business needs
- projects support businesses and workers that are impacted or at risk of being impacted by company closures or layoffs
- projects expand work-based learning opportunities including apprenticeships for targeted populations

- projects provide skill upgrading/training services to businesses and workers impacted or at risk of being impacted by company closures or layoffs.

For Rapid Response Activity, the State of Illinois considers a layoff averted when:

- A worker's job is saved with an existing employer that is at risk of downsizing or closing; or
- A worker at risk of dislocation transitions to a different job with the same employer or a new job with a different employer and experiences no or minimal unemployment.

A successful layoff aversion program averts layoff costs and reduces the financial risks to the employer and community as well as the Unemployment Insurance benefit costs. Further, the worker continues paying payroll and other taxes which results in a positive outcome for all. Layoff aversion provides 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. Applicants that administer layoff aversion projects are required to identify the factors that contribute to the “risk” of layoffs. Below are some of the “risk” indicators Illinois identified to determine if a business needs training assistance to maintain a competitive workforce.

- Declining Sales
- Supply Chain Issues
- Industry/Market Trends
- Changes in Management Philosophy or Ownership
- Worker Does Not Have the Necessary Skills
- Strong Possibility of a Job If a Worker Attains New Skills
- Other “At-Risk” Indicators

a. 2. C. In addition, describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities

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-site contact with the employer, representatives of the affected workers and the local community;
- The provision of information and access to unemployment compensation benefits and programs, such as short-time compensation, comprehensive one-stop 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.

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: tornadoes, flooding, ice and snow, drought, and less frequently, earthquakes and fires. State rapid response staff mobilize upon learning that a natural disaster is underway to assist in the provision of allowable and appropriate services. The State reserves statewide rapid response funds that are available to quickly provide resources to the local workforce area(s) to serve eligible participants. In instances where the Federal Emergency Management Agency declares a *public assistance* disaster area the State will typically submit a National Dislocated Worker Grant.

In October 2019 the State of Illinois received approval of a waiver to allow the use of statewide funds reserved by the Governor to provide statewide rapid response activities (i.e. WIOA section 134(a)(2)(A)), and for use to provide statewide employment and training activities (i.e. WIOA section 134(a)(2)(B) and (3)) in order to provide comprehensive Disaster Recovery assistance to affected areas as described in WIOA 170(d) and 20 CFR 687.100(b). Under this waiver permitted WIOA statewide fund use includes expeditious allocation of funds to a local workforce innovation board, or local board, so they may respond quickly to a disaster, emergency, or other qualifying event as described at 20 CFR 687.100(b). Only those events, and cascading events caused by a qualifying event, that have been declared as an emergency or disaster by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), by the chief official of a Federal Agency with jurisdiction over the Federal response to a disaster with potential significant loss of employment, or the Governor of Illinois qualify for the use of WIOA statewide funds.

a. 2. D. 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 Sec. 221(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 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 partnerships 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. In addition to members of the Rapid Response team investigating news articles, the Trade Unit reviews all WARN filings, Mass Layoff Statistics and the USDOL website for filed petitions and certifications that may have ties to Illinois. These activities ensure early petition filing and outreach to workers who may be affected by foreign trade. 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. An overview of the Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits and services including the next steps if the petition is certified is presented. Since workers oftentimes 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.

- Response Reserve funds are dedicated to layoff aversion strategies and to assist businesses and laid-off workers. Layoff aversion strategies include the 2018 Talent Pipeline NOFO (will be renamed in 2020) through the Department of Commerce. The Talent Pipeline (Layoff Aversion) projects are designed to award grants for demonstration projects providing Rapid Response services to businesses. Funding supports businesses and workers impacted or at risk of being impacted by company closures or layoffs. The goal of this program is to help businesses avert layoffs where possible and help current workers retrain to meet the companies' current workforce needs and to help those workers who were laid off successfully and quickly re-enter the workforce.
- Commerce is interested in investing in projects that specifically identify employers that are at-risk and to serve WIOA-eligible workers; including projects for recently separated veterans; projects that connect employers to WIOA eligible dislocated workers, eligible incumbent workers through short-term, on-the-job and customized training programs; and registered apprenticeships before or after layoff and prior to new employment.
- Training projects must provide workers with new skills to retain their existing job or meet new company workforce needs. In the case of a layoff, the goals are to quickly transition to a new job 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 supply additional support for affected workers and accommodate serving more individuals.

b. 1. Work-Based Training Models

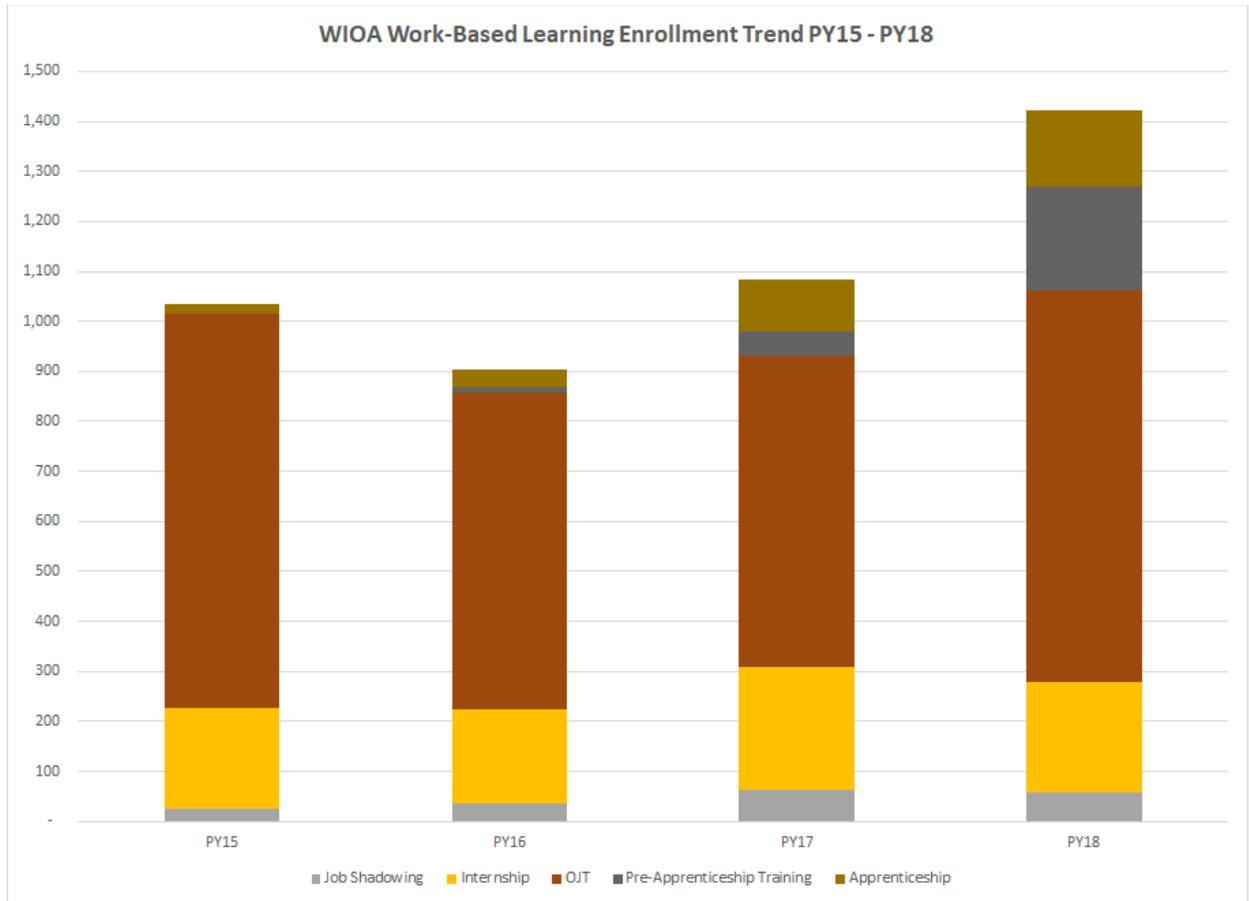
If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and customized training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State’s strategies for how 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. Trainees learn specific skills needed, and how 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 gained marketable skills to provide upward mobility and move forward along a career pathway.

Efforts to promote and support work-based learning led to the following WIOA enrollment trends between PY15 and PY18:

WORK-BASED LEARNING ENROLLMENT						
Year	Job		OJT	Pre-Apprenticeship		TOTAL
	Shadowing	Internship		Training	Apprenticeship	
PY15	26	200	789	-	19	1,034
PY16	36	188	632	13	34	903
PY17	63	247	622	48	105	1,085
PY18	59	220	784	205	153	1,421
% Change	126.9%	10.0%	-0.6%	20400.0%	705.3%	37.4%
Source: Illinois Workforce Development System						

The recent emphasis on pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeships has led to dramatic Title IB enrollment increases. WIOA-funded pre-apprenticeship training was nonexistent prior to PY16.



Commerce promoted a resurgence of on-the-job training for several years using National Emergency OJT Grants (NEG) and incorporating OJT and internships into Illinois projects conducted under a \$12 million Workforce Innovation Fund grant.

Incumbent Worker Training

Illinois recognizes 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, that anticipated increase in incumbent worker training was realized.

In PY15, local areas funded 53 IWT projects with 42 companies with a total investment of approximately \$700 thousand that trained just over 700 workers. In PY18 local areas funded 318 projects with 240 companies with a total investment of over \$4.1 million that trained over 2,900 workers.

Local Workforce Area Formula Grant IWT Projects

	Number of Employers	Number of Projects	Employees Enrolled	Project Cost
PY15	42	53	795	\$ 722,400
PY18	240	318	2,911	\$ 4,127,988
Change	198	265	2,116	\$ 3,405,588
% Change	471.4%	500.0%	266.2%	471.4%
Source: Illinois Incumbent Worker Tracking System				

Overall PY18 incumbent worker training (formula and non-formula funded) saw 477 projects with 359 companies and 6,447 workers enrolled in training and total investments of over \$9.3 million. The state enthusiastically supports incumbent worker training. In PY18, 19 of the state's 22 local areas, or 86 percent, provided incumbent worker training. Our goal is to have 100% local area participation by the end of 2024.

b. 2. Registered Apprenticeship

Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., job center staff taking applications and conducting assessments).

The State is embedding Registered Apprenticeship on multiple levels and aligning it within career pathways as part of all workforce development efforts. The use of Registered Apprenticeships will be encouraged through demonstration projects, policy guidance and technical assistance. With increased attention on various forms of work-based learning, we expect all types of apprenticeship (pre-apprenticeship, youth, non-registered and registered) to become more common as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is implemented. Encouraging participants to simultaneously earn and learn higher technical skills through an apprenticeship will set them up to succeed in the workplace. The ultimate solution to incorporating Registered Apprenticeships into WIOA will depend on the final form of Title IB performance requirements, the planned duration of the training and the occupational demand.

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) is moving toward a comprehensive, cross-program, public-private approach to fostering the use of Registered Apprenticeships. On June 16, 2016, the IWIB created an Apprenticeship Standing Committee to recommend a plan for establishing a comprehensive and integrated apprenticeship system in Illinois, oversee its implementation and performance and recommend improvements. This committee represents employers, business associations, organized labor, education, community-based organizations, philanthropies, local workforce innovation areas, national non-profits, and the four core state agency partners.

The committee's planning efforts started in June 2016 and was supported by an ApprenticeshipUSA State Accelerator Grant. Since then, the Committee, through the Department of Commerce, has applied for and received three Apprenticeship Expansion grants from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Through its planning and implementation responsibilities, this committee plays a lead role in integrating Registered Apprenticeships throughout Illinois' workforce development system. Four areas of activity are included in the Apprenticeship Standing Committee's charge:

1. Fully integrate apprenticeship into state workforce development, education, and economic development strategies and programs;
2. Support the rapid development of new apprenticeship programs and/or the significant expansion of existing programs;
3. Support the development and recruitment of a diverse pipeline of apprentices; and
4. Build state capacity to make it easier for industry to start apprenticeship programs and for apprentices to access opportunities.

The IWIB Apprenticeship Committee recognizes that apprenticeship is an effective work-based learning strategy into a career pathway. To further integrate apprenticeship and advance the use of this strategy, the Committee created two work groups: Marketing and Systems and Supports. These work groups were created to identify and implement specific activities to reach Illinois' goals of expanding and diversifying Registered Apprenticeship throughout the State. They formed and have refined a strategic plan that identifies priority activities to reach the overarching workforce goals for the IWIB Apprenticeship Committee and to ensure it is aligned with the State's strategic plan.

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) Apprenticeship Committee's Marketing Work Group was formed in part to help determine short-term and long-term outreach goals to expand awareness of apprenticeship programs and opportunities for businesses and individuals in Illinois. They have rebranded apprenticeship in Illinois to "Apprenticeship Illinois" with a new URL, www.ApprenticeshipIllinois.com, and a new logo. This website is the official apprenticeship-landing page for the State and is a repository of resources for potential employers, sponsors, apprentices, etc.

The Marketing Work Group has started creating outreach strategies to employers and potential apprentices. On a continuum of work-based learning and the level of employer engagement, Registered Apprenticeship requires the highest level of employer engagement. Due to the lack of interest, awareness, and understanding of apprenticeship, the Marketing Work Group decided to first focus on outreach to employers. Expanding apprenticeships helps businesses with their current and future workforce needs as well as individuals with a career pathway, which includes work-based learning.

The work group completed a state-by-state analysis of apprenticeship websites and best practices for (a) apprenticeship listings and searches, (b) identifying content gaps in the state's apprenticeship website – ApprenticeshipIllinois.com, and (c) marketing and outreach resources by audience. The work group also completed a series of detailed one-on-one personal interviews with business managers and owners throughout Illinois with different: industries, sizes, locations in Illinois, and familiarity with apprenticeship programs. These business interviews revealed the following:

- They mostly hire internally and use some type of on-the-job training.
- Important factors for training programs included seeking out candidates with appropriate soft skills, diverse skills, and the ability to process information.
- Most are experiencing high turnover.
- Most had misconceptions about what apprenticeship programs provide and how they function.
- Many are aware of apprenticeship programs in the trades but are generally unfamiliar with any within their own industry.

The interviews also revealed that businesses consider cost and time as barriers to implementing Registered Apprenticeship programs.

The Marketing Work Group will also focus on outreach to individuals, specifically those from disenfranchised populations. Most apprentices in Illinois are white males between the ages of 25 and 54. The Marketing Work Group has identified multiple organizations to support outreach to other populations.

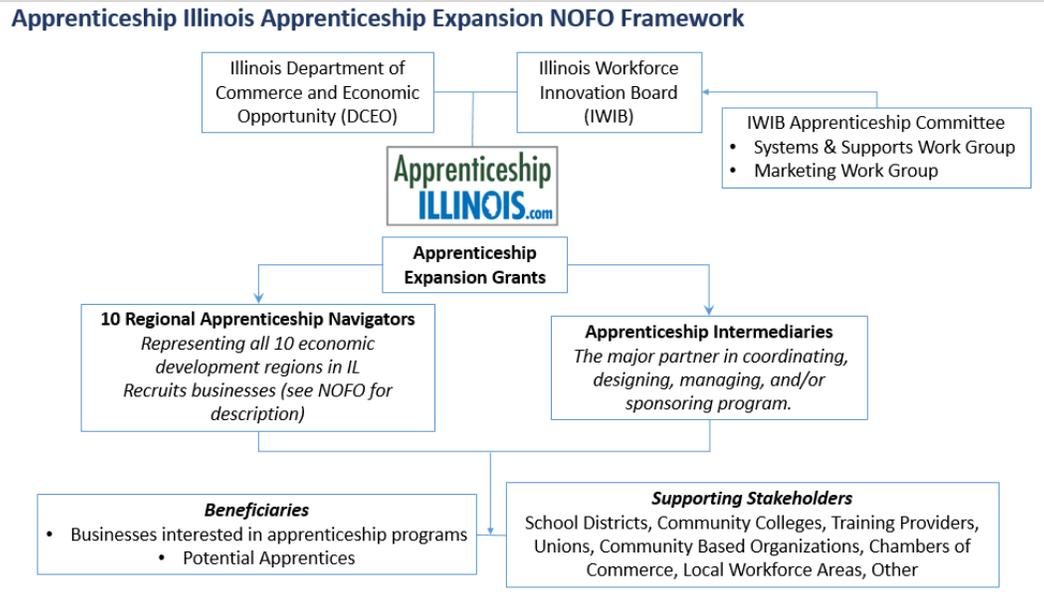
Next steps for the Marketing Work Group's current research indicates the following needs to successfully promote apprenticeships as a way to meet workforce needs with businesses across the state and to attract individuals to a career pathway:

- develop consistent marketing platforms in social media
- identify and secure outreach "ambassadors" or "champions"
- identify and secure organizations and apprentices sharing their success stories
- networking and collaboration
- development of outreach materials
- improving the ApprenticeshipIllinois.com site as a resource
- press releases

Some states, such as Illinois, do not have state apprenticeship offices, where apprenticeship development and programming can be centralized and expanded. Currently, apprenticeship programs cut across four state entities: Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Department of Employment Security, Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services, and the Illinois Community College Board. Commerce has a long-term vision for growing apprenticeships that revolves around funding designated regional navigators to promote expansion and intermediaries to support the apprenticeship experience start to finish.

Because Illinois has a decentralized structure as a state, expanding apprenticeships statewide will need an infrastructure to support development and implementation in the field. The Department and the IWIB Apprenticeship Committee Systems and Supports Work Group determined support for Apprenticeship Intermediaries and Regional Navigators are the best investment to build the

foundation for apprenticeship expansion in Illinois. Illinois needs an effective, uniform apprenticeship support system that builds on the state’s holistic apprenticeship framework (including pre-apprenticeship, youth apprenticeship, registered apprenticeship and non-registered) and facilitates employers’ development and use of quality apprenticeship programs in a variety of sectors and regions. Regional Apprenticeship Navigators and Apprenticeship Intermediaries represent two important sides of a statewide apprenticeship system: Navigators represent the demand side, e.g., businesses who want to host apprenticeships. Intermediaries represent the supply side, e.g., the institutions and/or partnerships that coordinate and/or implement apprenticeship programs, including recruiting potential apprentices and preparing them to enter apprenticeships.



In PY2017 and 2018 Commerce distributed \$2.5 M in ten Statewide Activities grants for apprenticeship navigators and intermediaries. The increased enrollment in WIOA-funded pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeships noted earlier is a direct result of the work undertaken in these grants. A formal Notice of Funding Opportunity to continue the efforts into PY19 and beyond was released in October 2019.

The Systems and Supports Work Group also identified the need to expand people’s understanding of apprenticeship. As a direct outcome from the Committee’s recommendations for building capacity, Commerce contracted Chicago Jobs Council (CJC) and Young Invincibles (YI) to create and provide Apprenticeship 101 and Apprenticeship 201 workshops in all 10 Economic Development Regions of the State. During this quarter, CJC and YI continued and finished providing Apprenticeship 101 Workshops and Apprenticeship 201 Workshops, for a total of 18 workshops with over 285 participants around the state.

To increase employer involvement and buy-in, the Apprenticeship Committee researched how other states provided incentives to employers, finding several providing tax credits. On May 29, 2019, the Illinois legislature passed SB 1591, which is an apprenticeship education tax credit,

allowing employers to receive a tax credit up to \$5,000 towards the expenses incurred on Registered Apprentices' related training instruction. Language from the new law is below:

For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2020, and beginning on or before January 1, 2025, the employer of one or more qualifying apprentices shall be allowed a credit against the tax imposed by subsections (a) and (b) of Section 201 of the Illinois Income Tax Act for qualified education expenses incurred on behalf of a qualifying apprentice. The credit shall be equal to 100% of the qualified education expenses, but in no event may the total credit amount awarded to a single taxpayer in a single taxable year exceed \$3,500 per qualifying apprentice. A taxpayer shall be entitled to an additional \$1,500 credit against the tax imposed by subsections (a) and (b) of Section 201 of the Illinois Income Tax Act if (i) the qualifying apprentice resides in an underserved area as defined in Section 5-5 of the Economic Development for a Growing Economy Tax Credit Act during the school year for which a credit is sought by an employer or (ii) the employer's principal place of business is located in an underserved area, as defined in Section 5-5 of the Economic Development for a Growing Economy Tax Credit Act.

While implementing the work plan's short- and mid-term activities, the Committee continues to focus on long-term goals, which includes:

- Focusing on data collection and building the data infrastructure to support growth and expansion in Registered Apprenticeships;
- Addressing misperceptions and confusion surrounding apprenticeship;
- Developing an apprenticeship performance framework to measure participant and employer outcomes at the local, regional and state levels through both quantitative and qualitative data;
- Continuing to integrate apprenticeships into state workforce development and economic development policy; and
- Identifying other sources of support for apprenticeships to strengthen the entire apprenticeship pipeline and ensure long-term sustainability for the system.

Each of the public partners is committed to jointly integrating the policy and program recommendations into services. In addition to the efforts of the committee, Illinois has already begun incorporating policy and program enhancements to promote the use of Registered Apprenticeships. In April 2016, WIOA policy letter 15-WIOA-5.3, which pertains to the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) was issued. The new policy allows apprenticeship programs registered with the United States Department of Labor (DOL) to bypass certain application requirements and automatically be placed on the ETPL upon notifying a local area of its interest in providing services to Title IB participants.

b. 3. Training Provider Eligibility Procedure

Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

On April 20, 2016, Illinois transmitted Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Policy 15-WIOA-5.3 (now WIOA ePolicy Chapter 7.3), which set procedures, criteria and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs. This policy is included with this plan under *Attachment U* at <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20U%20-%20Policy%20Documents%202020.pdf>. Below is a summary of the requirements of that policy.

Criteria for Initial Eligibility

Only eligible training providers and their eligible training programs will be included in the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The initial eligibility requirements apply to all organizations providing training services to WIOA adults and dislocated workers. Providers of on-the-job training, customized training, incumbent worker training, internships, and paid or unpaid work experience opportunities, or transitional employment will not be subject to those requirements. To be eligible to receive funds for the provision of training services, the provider must be:

- an institution of higher education that provides a program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential; this may include programs receiving approval or accreditation by the U.S. Department of Education, Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, or Illinois State Board of Education;
- an entity that carries out programs 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.) as recognized in Illinois by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Apprenticeship; or
- another public or private provider of a program of training services, which may include joint labor-management organizations; eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities under Title II if such activities are provided in combination with occupational skills training; or programs that have been recognized by the industry as meeting the standards necessary for approval or accreditation, when such standards exist.

All Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs registered with DOL, Office of Apprenticeship or a recognized state apprenticeship agency are automatically eligible to be included as an eligible training provider so long as they show interest in being added to the ETPL and the following process is completed:

- Registered Apprenticeships must indicate their interest in being included on the ETPL.
- Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs) should inform the RAs in their local area via mass email, phone call or other method of these requirements.
- An RA may contact its LWIA or State of Illinois, Office of Employment and Training to indicate its interest in being included on the ETPL.

- LWIAs must notify the Illinois Department of Commerce, Office of Employment and Training in writing of all Registered Apprenticeship programs that have shown interest in being included on the ETPL.

Procedure for Initial Eligibility

Except for Registered Apprenticeships (see above), new training providers must apply for Initial Eligibility in accordance with the following guidance: Applications for Initial Eligibility of Training Providers and Training Programs. Applications for initial eligibility must be submitted according to the geographical location of the training program. A training provider is prohibited from applying for training program eligibility in LWIAs where the program site is not geographically located, unless the LWIA in which the program is located denies eligibility or fails to act on the application within 30 days of the date of application. The LWIA should instruct the training provider as to where they should apply for each training program, as follows:

- Training programs located in a single LWIA must initially apply with the LWIA where its program is geographically located.
- Training programs offered in multiple LWIAs that are identical across each of the LWIAs must initially apply to the LWIA in which the training provider has identified as its headquarters and/or primary location.
- Training programs offered in multiple LWIAs - but the program is not substantially the same across the various LWIAs - must initially apply to each LWIA in which the training program is offered.
- Training programs located out-of-state or not offered at a physical location (e.g., distance learning) must initially apply to the LWIA from which it anticipates receiving the most students. A training provider is prohibited from applying for training program eligibility in LWIAs where the program site is not geographically located, unless the LWIA in which the program is located denies eligibility or fails to act on the application within 30 days of the date of application.

Information Requirements:

- Program Name (should match the name found in a course catalog for the training provider, if published);
- Program Description;
- 6-digit CIP code;
- O*Net code(s) that identifies the occupation of the eligible training program;
- Website link to additional program information;
- How many weeks it typically takes to complete the program;
- The total hours of instruction/classroom/lab time;
- Other than employment, the primary goal of the program (i.e., Associates Degree, Bachelor's Degree, etc.);

- If Certification, License, or Registration, the name of the certifying, licensing, or registering body;
- Identify up to three occupations for which the individual will be qualified to immediately hold after completing this program;
- The program offerings;
- The entry-level requirements of the program;
- The total cost of this program;
- Types of financial aid available; and
- Year the program was established.

All job seekers and program partners will have ready access to the provider list on the Illinois workNet web portal. The information provided on the list will allow local career services staff under the LWIBs and the Illinois Departments of Employment Security and Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services to better coordinate services and allow job seekers to make better-informed decisions when selecting programs of study.

Procedure for Continuing Eligibility

The continued eligibility policy requires that all training providers (other than Registered Apprenticeships) apply at least every two years for approval, as well as for all training programs, to remain on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Eligibility is determined based on state and local performance and eligibility criteria, and any other conditions the local board considers necessary. Timelines for applying for continued eligibility as well as approval or denial are outlined within the policy.

Below are the requirements for continued eligibility and continued inclusion on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) for training providers and programs previously approved for initial eligibility and those training providers and programs that were approved for transitional eligibility (as provided under WIOA Transition Policy Letter 7).

- LWIAs must ensure all training providers have their eligible training programs determined for continued eligibility on at least a biennial (at least every two years) basis to maintain their status as an eligible training program.
 - LWIAs may want to inform each training provider of any upcoming continued eligibility dates (i.e., a notice sent to the training provider 90 days prior to the continued eligibility date).
 - Continued eligibility is based on the date entered during the initial eligibility or most recent continued eligibility determination of the training program (as outlined in Section E.4. of this policy letter).
- The LWIA must receive the training provider's intent to apply for continued eligibility of a training program or programs in sufficient time to meet the following continued eligibility timeline requirements.

- The training provider expresses intent for continued eligibility of a training program by resubmitting the Training Program Basic Information application in IWDS.
- If a training program has had only changes in information that are not significant information (as outlined in Section F.2.a.), the training provider must make such changes in IWDS and save the Training Program Basic Information record.
- If a training program has had no changes in information, the training provider must still save the Training Program Basic Information record.
- Once the Training Program Basic Information record has been saved, the Initial Criteria Status record will change to "Pending Continued Eligibility (recertification)".
- The change to "Pending Continued Eligibility (recertification)" status will prompt the LWIA that they must send the training program to the LWIB for review and determination.
 - A report will be available for the local area to identify any training programs with a "Pending Continued Eligibility" status.
- The frequency of producing these reports will be a local decision.
- The LWIA should utilize due diligence in producing this report routinely throughout the year keeping in mind training programs may be jeopardized if they are not approved for continued eligibility promptly.
- The report is titled "Training Programs Nearing Continued Eligibility (recertification) Date" in IWDS.
- The LWIA should continue to make available and enroll customers in any training program with a "Pending" status.
- The LWIA has 90 days to submit the application(s) to the LWIB for review and approval. The submission to the LWIB should include the following items:
 - A current copy of the Training Program Basic Information record from IWDS;
 - Identification of items that have changed since the initial eligibility or most recent continued eligibility determination;
 - Performance data (as outlined in Section J of this policy letter) for the training program; and
 - Any additional information the training provider has submitted for review or the LWIB determines pertinent to the review.
- The LWIB should grant continued eligibility to a training program based on the following:
 - State and local eligibility criteria are still being met;
 - State and local performance criteria have been met;
 - One or more O*Net codes associated with the training program remain on the current Demand Occupation Training List;

- The training provider has maintained timely updates in the Illinois Workforce Development System of information on the training program; and
 - Other conditions for which the LWIB considers necessary for continued eligibility.
- The LWIB must determine eligibility of the training program within 30 days of receiving the application from the LWIA.
 - An exception to the requirement to approve subsequent eligibility of transitionally eligible providers and programs within 30 days of application was extended through June 30, 2016. This exception provided up to 90 days from the application date for the LWIB to determine a program eligible. This was extended to allow local boards ample time to meet and review the applications as this policy was phased in. After June 30, 2016, this exception expired. The 90-day period did NOT extend past June 30, 2016 as these providers and programs received a determination no later than June 30, 2016 to avoid removal from the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) as their transitional eligibility period expired.
- LWIBs must notify the LWIA within five (5) business days of their decision to approve continued eligibility as a training program.
 - The LWIA must update the Training Program Basic Information record in IWDS within ten (10) business days of notification by the LWIB. The update should include the following:
 - The Status must be changed from "Pending Continued Eligibility (Recertification)" to "Accept" to indicate an accepted continued eligibility application.
 - The Program Status must be listed as "Approved".
 - The Last Elig./Cert. Date must be listed as the date the LWIB approved the continued eligibility, not the date the entry is made into IWDS.
 - The Next Elig./Cert. Date should be listed as the date for which the next continued eligibility should take place (and should take into consideration the same factors for initial eligibility as outlined in Section C.3. of this policy letter).
- Training programs that are not determined eligible by the LWIB within 30 days of receipt of the application from the LWIA will be removed from the approved program list and may reapply after one year.
- Training programs that are not determined eligible within 120 days of their continued eligibility date will be removed from the approved program list in IWDS. *(Note: The intent of this provision is to automatically clear training programs from IWDS when they have not been approved for continued eligibility in a timely fashion. Such programs will not be available for selection and thus are removed.)*

- LWIAs shall cease to enroll customers in any training program that has been moved to the capture list. Customers who have already been enrolled in training programs that are removed from the capture list shall be allowed to complete such training programs.
- A training provider may reapply for eligibility for any training program that was not determined eligible for any reason other than "for cause" reasons.

Illinois is currently working on two projects centered around the Eligible Training Provider List - an Eligible Training Provider workgroup and ProPath Illinois.

The workgroup is tasked with expanding the scope of information collected from providers, improving the process for information collection and management, increasing the transparency of quality performance data, updating the criteria and listing of demand occupations, enhance the articulation of training programs to career pathway and bridge programs, and ensuring out-of-state training providers meet equivalent criteria to in-state.

ProPath Illinois is a statewide technological platform that can be utilized by both education and workforce partners throughout the state that integrates existing educational and workforce training provider and program data and allows for the ability of agile enhancement to that data. ProPath Illinois builds on the existing state Educational PW20 system, the IL Longitudinal Data System (ILDS), the Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator (CDDA), the IL Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI), and the IL Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) systems and partners to advance the state forward into the next generation of transparency and accessibility of educational and workforce training information. In addition to creating an interoperable training provider and program data directory, ProPath Illinois will establish a statewide Illinois- Administrative Data Research Facility (I-ADRF) that has the ability to facilitate and accelerate data sharing, exploration, and research into the next generation. The I-ADRF is part of a national data research piloting initiative, the Administrative Data Research Facility (ADRF), which enables secure access to analytical tools, data storage and discovery services, and general computing resources for users to revolutionize evidence-based policymaking and comply with the Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act of 2016.

b. 4. Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and 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

All Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) inquirants are asked to identify if they are on public assistance, are low-income, or are basic skills deficient. Inquirants are asked to provide documentation of earning diplomas, degrees and certificates 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 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recorded and tracked in the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS). IWDS is a web-based client tracking and reporting system that serves as the central repository of data on all

WIOA participants. Tracking of participants with these indicators is done routinely at the local and state level to ensure that priority of service requirements are met.

On October 29, 2015, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) issued WIOA ePolicy Chapter 4.2 and other related policy letters (*see Attachment U at <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20U%20-%20Policy%20Documents%202020.pdf>*) that outline Commerce's WIOA Title IB general and funding stream eligibility and documentation requirements. Allowable supporting documentation is listed in the attachment to the policy letter and there are many items that can be used to support eligibility and identification for priority of service. We require the use of TABE and other tests to verify basic skills deficiency. Identifying public assistance registrants is supported by data from the Illinois Department of Human Services systems. Veteran status is documented using the DD214 form.

Additionally, Commerce is currently drafting a policy that will include a Basic Skills Screening Tool for Priority of Service that will help identify if an individual is basic skills deficient for the purposes of priority of service.

In Illinois, the state is aligning WIOA Title I policy with the Title II Illinois Adult Education Assessment policy when determining the basic skills levels of customers for enrollment. The adoption of this policy increases the likelihood that customers stay engaged with the WIOA one-stop system. Furthermore, increased collaboration among WIOA partner programs regarding assessment selection decreases the likelihood of customers having to complete multiple assessments to achieve the same purpose and ultimately creates greater efficiency in the overall workforce system. The result is optimal performance outcomes for the entire system. This partnership will extend to ensuring seamless coordination for English Language Learners through an online learning platform.

Commerce is in the process of updating its online monitoring instrument to reflect both state policy and the WIOA Final Rule. The updated monitoring instrument will provide for a review of general eligibility as well as priority of service based on the new requirements. In addition, the state's monitoring instrument will verify all local areas have established written policies and procedures to ensure priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient and veterans. Until updates to Commerce's online monitoring instrument are completed, Commerce continues to use WIOA-specific participant file review worksheets to monitor eligibility for participants served in the WIOA Adult program. Commerce conducts on-site programmatic and fiscal monitoring of all local areas at least once annually.

b. 5. Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs

The Annual 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 exceeding the fifty percent (50%) transfer threshold based on the local data and overall performance.

c. 1. Identify the State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants or contracts 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 or contracts.[11]

[11] Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

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.

c. 2. Describe the strategies the State will use to achieve improved outcomes for out-of-school youth as described in 129(a)(1)(B), including how it will leverage and align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available.

Illinois' Unified State Plan seeks to frame recommendations for creating sustainable career pathways for youth throughout the state, with a focus on the needs of young people who are not in school and not working, a group we refer to as "Opportunity Youth." Of the estimated 1.8 million youth ages 15-24 living in Illinois in 2013, approximately 18.3% were considered to be in poverty and 19.3% were unemployed - more than twice the rate of the entire labor force. Further, of this 15-24-year-old cohort, an estimated 33.5% were not in school or working. These opportunity youth have much higher poverty (30%) and unemployment (40.2%) rates than the general population that age.

At the state level, the Core Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners seek to leverage existing efforts such as the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth, which is creating a strategic vision for education and health and human services by bringing together all state entities that interact with children into a central unit, and the New Skills for Youth Initiative, a national effort funding Illinois' secondary education agency to actualize a robust plan for career pathway curriculum integration and connections to the workforce. In addition to these examples, Illinois currently has additional legislative efforts and policy initiatives that have been and will continue to be tied into the Youth Committee of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), formed as a recommendation of the IWIB Disadvantaged Youth Task Force (which met from 2015-2016).

Through the IWIB Youth Committee, Illinois has leveraged the input of the business community, the Illinois P-20 Council, Illinois Learning Exchanges, state boards, agencies and other partners to create a set of criteria for career pathway programs that meet the needs of Illinois youth that have barriers to employment.

Illinois has secured a funding commitment from all core WIOA partners to blend together various funding streams to support business-led sector initiatives based on career pathways that fully mainstream this youth population, while pointing the way to a sustainable integration of services across agencies and partnerships. These funding and relevant criteria were developed into a Request for Application that identified a number of pilot projects. Technical Assistance related to the development of quality programs is being designed for deployment leading up to the release of the Request for Application (RFA).

The State subsequently refined the RFA to incorporate lessons learned from the first application round. The program design is focused on a platform of work-based learning, the development of foundational skills, continuous improvement through education and training, and sustainability - all with the support of public-sector and business partners. Ten success elements for workforce pilot programs serving opportunity youth were identified by the task force and have been included as the pillars of the RFA, as well as key activities identified towards the accomplishment of Illinois' goals for youth activities. These elements demonstrate the principles, strategies, and criteria in the WIOA Unified State Plan and how various funding sources may be blended for full regional ownership and sustainability.

Another project for this population is "Building Futures". Launched in 2016, "Building Futures" is a collaborative initiative between the Departments of Commerce and Children and Family Services that expands state resources to improve employment outcomes for youth transitioning from foster care. Youth and young adults in "Building Futures" have access to approved training programs and employment services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The program promotes employment and training opportunities for youth in care of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) through an employment and training program with a sector-based career pathway approach to job readiness, career exploration, and work-based learning.

Most recently the State of Illinois was granted a waiver to allow the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth. The waiver is designed to increase program flexibility, enhance informed customer choice, allow all youth to benefit from the services provided by Illinois' certified training providers, and expand training options without requiring Illinois workNet (One-Stop) operators to register in-school youth participants 18 years old or older in the adult program.

Using ITAs also allows youth service provider an opportunity to promote and encourage training as another option to enter into an increasingly tough labor market. This waiver allows youth to select approved training programs from Illinois' list of demand occupation training programs.

c. 3. Describe how the state will ensure that all 14 program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2) are made available and effectively implemented, including quality pre-apprenticeship programs under the work experience program element. [12]

[12] Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

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.

c. 4. 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). If the state does not have a policy, describe how the state will ensure that local areas will have a policy for these criteria.

Illinois does not yet have a statewide policy. The Illinois Workforce Investment Board (IWIB) Youth Committee is examining the issue from a statewide policy perspective. The Illinois IWIB created the Disadvantaged Youth Task Force to use the vision of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified State Plan to frame recommendations for creating sustainable career pathways for youth throughout the state. The task force, in turn, created the IWIB Youth Committee to carry on its work. The committee is currently setting an agenda to examine policy issues affecting youth services in the wake of final WIOA regulations. The “Needs Additional Assistance” clauses in both In-School and Out-of-School youth eligibility will be reexamined by the committee for possible statewide policy solutions that are able to fit both our urban and rural dynamics, while leaving the flexibility needed for local areas to design effective local programming. This item presents an opportunity for each of the core partners to help create a cross-program policy definition that will allow their local staff to have consistent definitions. This coordinated policy could be codified through a joint issuance (the preferred method) or could be adopted as policy by each of the core partners. Regardless of the mechanism for issuance, the state partners for Title IB, Title II, Title III and Title IV are committed to improving service delivery through adoption of common policies.

c. 5. 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 and provide the state policy for determining whether a youth is attending or not attending school.

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, daycare 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.”

c. 6. If using the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), include the State definition which must further define how to determine if an 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. If not using the portion of the definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), indicate that is the case.

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.

Commerce is currently drafting a policy that will provide a definition for basic skills deficiency under WIOA Section 3(5)(B).

d. Single-area State Requirements (D1-D4)

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must include—

- 1. Any comments from the public comment period that represent disagreement with the Plan. (WIOA section 108(d)(3).)**
- 2. The entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA section 108(b)(15).)**
- 3. A description of the type and availability of WIOA title I Youth activities and successful models, including for youth with disabilities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)**

Illinois is not a single-area state.

d. 4. A description of the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.

Illinois is not a single-area state.

d. 5. The competitive process used to award the subgrants and contracts for title I activities.

Illinois is not a single-area state.

d. 6. How training services outlined in section 134 will be provided through individual training accounts and/or through contracts, and how such training approaches will be coordinated. Describe how the State will meet informed customer choice requirements regardless of training approach.

Illinois is not a single-area state.

d. 7. How the State Board, in fulfilling Local Board functions, will coordinate title I activities with those activities under title II. Describe how the State Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under title II consistent with WIOA secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA sec. 232.

Illinois is not a single-area state.

d. 8. Copies of executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the one-stop delivery system, including cooperative agreements with entities administering Rehabilitation Act programs and services.

Illinois is not a single-area state.

e. Waiver Requests (optional) (e1-e6)

States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

- 1. Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;**
- 2. Describes the actions that the State or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;**
- 3. Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;**
- 4. Describes how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:**
 - A. Supporting employer engagement;**
 - B. Connecting education and training strategies;**

- C. Supporting work-based learning;
- D. Improving job and career results, and
- E. Other guidance issued by the department.

5. Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and

6. Describes the processes used to:

- A. Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;
- B. Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;
- C. Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;
- D. Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.
- E. Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report.

7. The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

WAIVER REQUEST - EXPAND DEFINITION OF APPRENTICESHIP CREDENTIAL

Statutory and/or regulatory requirements to be waived

Indicate which part of the WIOA or the regulations the state would like to waive.

The State of Illinois is seeking a waiver from Section 116 of WIOA and 20 CFR 677.155, to expand the definition of the credential required to be issued specifically by Registered Apprenticeship programs during program participation or within one year after "exit".

Actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers

Describe the actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers.

There are currently no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. State of Illinois regulations and policy align with current federal law.

Goals and expected programmatic outcomes of waiver

Describe and specify how the waiver will help the state achieve an identified strategic goal or set of goals that it has outlined in its State Plan. If possible and appropriate the type of waiver

requested, provide quantifiable projections for programmatic outcomes that will result from the waiver.

Illinois is leveraging multiple initiatives to further integrate apprenticeship opportunities into the WIOA required and optional program partners throughout the state. The Governor has mobilized a broad cross-section of apprenticeship stakeholders to drive this important planning process. Representing a range of perspectives and resources, these individuals are serving on the Illinois Apprenticeship Committee (a standing committee of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB)) and oversee this planning effort and continue into implementation. This committee is encouraging demonstration projects as well as making policy and technical assistance recommendations.

A waiver, to expand the definition of the credential required to be issued by an apprenticeship program during program participation or within one year after "exit" would greatly increase the promotion and utilization of WIOA-supported apprenticeships.

Outcomes

Given the work-based learning and academic structure of apprenticeship programs, we request allowing the credential to include one or more of the following Registered Apprenticeship components completed in one year:

- Attainment of college credits - not just a two-year credential or certificate, associates, or another measure that takes more than one year to earn.
- The USDOL recommended 144 hours of related training instruction.
- The USDOL recommended minimum of 2000 hours of OJT.

These components of an expanded credential definition related to Registered Apprenticeship maintain the key qualities of a Recognized Post-Secondary Credential found in Section 3(52) of WIOA including industry-recognized, portable, third-party validated/accredited, and stackable.

Approval of this waiver will provide additional flexibility and support an increase in the usage of WIOA supported apprenticeships and seeing WIOA funding as an appropriate funding source. This waiver could also positively impact the other WIOA performance indicators.

It is anticipated that expanding the definition will ease some of the apprehension of LWIBs in using apprenticeship training models

Department of Labor's policy priorities

Describe how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:

- ***Supporting employer engagement;***
- ***Connecting education and training strategies;***
- ***Supporting work-based learning;***

- *Improving job and career results; and*
- *Other priorities as articulated in guidance.*

This waiver aligns with not only the Department of Labor's priorities, but also with those of the State of Illinois. Within the Illinois WIOA Unified Plan, are examples demonstrating the importance of apprenticeship programs at all levels, and how Illinois is moving toward strategies that expand both traditional and non-traditional type apprenticeship programs. As stated above, expanding the definition will increase the level of participation in apprenticeship and remove perceived barriers that may currently limit enrollment in them.

Individuals impacted by the waiver

Describe which populations the waiver will benefit, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment.

Both the education and workforce system will realize the benefits by an expanded definition of the credential required to be issued by an apprenticeship program during program participation or within one year after "exit". This will greatly increase the promotion and utilization of WIOA supported apprenticeships.

- *Process for monitoring progress in implementation*
- *Describes the processes used to monitor the progress in implementing the waiver.*
- *Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;*
- *Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;*
- *Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;*
- *Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.*
- *Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report.*

The State will use the following approach for monitoring progress in implementation:

State staff involved with the administration of apprenticeship programming will provide ongoing technical assistance and oversight as it relates to the appropriateness and the effectiveness of this waiver. This information will be submitted regularly to the IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee.

Annual WIOA on-site programmatic reviews will include evaluation review of the impact the waivers have on programmatic goals and outcomes.

Additionally, the IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee will have the responsibility of ensuring the specific goals and outcomes achieved by the waiver are realized. Furthermore, the

information gathered from the waiver will inform new or changes to policy as well as provide best practices.

This strategy ensures that the goals described above, as well as those outlined in the State's Unified Plan and the IWIB Strategic Plan, are consistent with established objectives of the WIOA and federal and state regulations.

Notice to affected local boards

Address how local boards affected by the waiver were notified of the request.

Local Boards via Board members and/or Board staff as well as WIOA partners and other interested stakeholders participate in policy development. Additionally, LWIBs receive the opportunity to participate in public comment period that includes webinars.

Public Comment

Provide a description of the proactive solicitation of public comments. At a minimum, post the proposed waiver request to the state's official website for comment. Ideally, develop a targeted outreach strategy to collect input and comment from all affected stakeholders. Submit any comments or concerns collected in this manner and the outcome of the state's review of the public comments received.

This waiver request was posted to the WIOA State Plan page of the Illinois workNet website. Public comments received will be included in the attachment with all comments.

Waiver Impact

Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report. The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

The IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee will have the responsibility of ensuring the specific goals and outcomes achieved by the waiver are realized. Furthermore, the information gathered from the waiver will inform new or changes to policy as well as provide best practices. Outcomes of the waiver will be reported in the WIOA Annual Report.

WAIVER REQUEST - ETPL REPORTING ON ALL STUDENTS

Statutory and/or regulatory requirements to be wave indicate which part of the WIOA or the regulations the state would like to waive.

The State of Illinois is seeking a waiver from the following Section(s):

1. Sections 116 and 122 of WIOA, and at 20 CFR 677.230 and 20 CFR 680.400 thru 680.530.

Specifically, Illinois is requesting to waive the requirements which require the collection and reporting of performance-related data on all students participating in training programs listed on the state's ETPL.

Illinois' education and workforce agencies established a unified ILDS inter-agency data sharing agreement and created the Common Demographic Database Administrator (CDDA) as part of the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) and the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI). Because of the ILDS efforts, Illinois can utilize the ILDS Master Client Index (MCI) unique identifier to leverage existing data systems and data sources to assist it with meeting the WIOA ETP performance reporting requirements. The Illinois Board of Higher Education, a member of the ILDS, is also the oversight body for private business vocational schools.

While Illinois released policy guidelines for the ETPL certification and works diligently to address streamlining reporting, the state continues to face challenges that are impeding full implementation of the ETPL requirement:

- Ensuring fairness in the process of determining training provider eligibility.
- Reducing the burden on training providers to submit performance information to the state which may not be readily accessible.
- Much of the performance information is self-reported through surveys, etc., which makes it difficult to get accurate performance data since students may not respond to surveys and, as a result, schools may just provide performance information they previously collected without resurveying students.
- Proprietary schools do not currently have a statewide system to report student data, and as such, there is no way to automatically match students with other data sources to calculate outcomes. This results in a large reporting burden on these types of training providers.
- Providing Information on eligible training programs to WIOA participants in a way that helps them make good decisions about how to use their ITAs.

Actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers. Describe the actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers.

There are currently no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. State of Illinois regulations and policy align with current federal law.

Goals and expected programmatic outcomes of waiver. Describe and specify how the waiver will help the state achieve an identified strategic goal or set of goals that it has outlined in its State Plan. If possible and appropriate the type of waiver requested, provide quantifiable projections for programmatic outcomes that will result from the waiver.

While the IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee may add others, at a minimum the goals and outcomes related to this waiver request include:

- Providing additional training options to enhance consumer choice and targeting training program that are in-demand

- Increasing the number of training providers to enhance competition and create economies of scale.
- Better overall performance outcomes for individuals pursuing training via ITAs.
- Stronger partnerships and relationships between training providers and the public workforce system.

Individuals impacted by the waiver. Describe which populations the waiver will benefit, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment.

Individuals who access training services or provide training services in Illinois will benefit from this waiver.

Process for monitoring progress in implementation. Describes the processes used to monitor the progress in implementing the waiver.

Annual WIOA on-site programmatic reviews will include an evaluation of the impact the waivers have on programmatic goals and outcomes.

Additionally, the IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee will have the responsibility of ensuring the specific goals and outcomes achieved by the waiver are realized. Furthermore, the information gathered from the waiver will inform new or changes to policy as well as provide best practices.

State staff involved with the administration of the ETPL and performance reporting will periodically examine the appropriateness and the effectiveness of this waiver. This strategy ensures that the goals described above, as well as those outlined in the State's Unified Plan, are consistent with established objectives of the WIOA and federal and state regulations.

Notice to affected local boards. Address how local boards affected by the waiver were notified of the request.

Local Boards via Board members and/or Board staff as well as WIOA partners and other interested stakeholders participate in policy development. Additionally, LWIBs receive the opportunity to participate in public comment period that includes webinars.

Public Comment

Provide a description of the proactive solicitation of public comments. At a minimum, post the proposed waiver request to the state's official website for comment. Ideally, develop a targeted outreach strategy to collect input and comment from all affected stakeholders. Submit any comments or concerns collected in this manner and the outcome of the state's review of the public comments received.

This waiver request was posted to the WIOA State Plan page of the Illinois workNet website. Public comments received will be included in the attachment with all comments.

Waiver Impact

Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report. The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

The IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee will have the responsibility of ensuring the specific goals and outcomes achieved by the waiver are realized. Furthermore, the information gathered from the waiver will inform new or changes to policy as well as provide best practices. Outcomes of the waiver will be reported in the WIOA Annual Report.

WAIVER REQUEST - OUT OF SCHOOL YOUTH EXPENDITURE RATE

Statutory and/or regulatory requirements to be waived

Indicate which part of the WIOA or the regulations the state would like to waive.

The State of Illinois is seeking a waiver from the following Section(s):

1. Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410, which require not less than 75 percent of funds allotted to states under Section 127(b)(1)(C), reserved under Section 128(a), and available for statewide activities under subsection (b), and not less than 75 percent of funds available to local areas under subsection (c), shall be used to provide youth workforce investment activities for OSY.

Specifically, Illinois is requesting to waive the following requirements:

- a. A waiver of the requirement to expend 75 percent of funding on the OSY population. Illinois is requesting that this percentage be lowered to 50 percent.
- b. A waiver of the requirement that local funding must meet the 75 percent minimum expenditure requirement. It is requested to allow a state-level Out-of-School Youth target (See 1 above) instead of requiring individual areas to each meet the minimum expenditure requirement.
- c. A waiver of the requirement to expend 75 percent of Statewide Activities funding on the OSY population. It is requested to eliminate this percentage to allow flexibility of funding for special projects that meet the vision and mission of the State.
- d. A waiver of the limitation of only 25 percent of funding to support in-school youth.
- e. A waiver to use funding over the 25 percent limitation in WIOA to provide pre-apprenticeship programs services to this population.

Illinois' current efforts for aligning education, workforce and economic development are laying a solid foundation for promoting leading career pathway models and best practices. Career

pathway development in Illinois is being expanded to encompass every level of the education system as well as across the needs of our diverse populations including those that face multiple barriers to achieving self-sufficiency.

Of importance to the Governor's vision, the IWIB Strategic Plan and the Unified State Plan is the expansion of career pathway systems into the secondary system for opportunity youth. This waiver will allow Illinois to support these visions and provide targeted strategies to the estimated 1.8 million youth ages 15-24 living in Illinois in 2013 and particularly focus on those within that number of which approximately 18.3% were in poverty and 19.3% were unemployed - more than twice the rate of the entire labor force.

Actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers

Describe the actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers.

There are currently no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. State of Illinois regulations and policy align with current federal law.

Goals and expected programmatic outcomes of waiver

Describe and specify how the waiver will help the state achieve an identified strategic goal or set of goals that it has outlined in its State Plan. If possible and appropriate the type of waiver requested, provide quantifiable projections for programmatic outcomes that will result from the waiver.

In support of the expansion of career pathway systems across the education system, Illinois will use this waiver to provide youth with barriers the necessary supports to successfully equip them with the academic and technical skills necessary to improve their employability. Furthermore, Illinois anticipates that this waiver will provide greater opportunity for blending funds at the federal, state, and local levels across the partners to increase innovative strategies for improving career pathway opportunities for youth.

Potential Outcomes resulting from these goals:

1. Increase in number of youth that receive a credential (i.e. diploma or high school equivalency) and continue to receive industry-recognized and/or some other post-secondary credentials.
2. Decrease in the number of youth disconnecting from the education system, particularly those transitioning out of foster care or those with a disability transitioning from high school.
3. Increase innovative strategies to address student retention, such as dual college enrollment, occupational training, or pre-apprenticeship to apprenticeship programs.

Department of Labor's policy priorities

Describe how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:

- *Supporting employer engagement;*
- *Connecting education and training strategies;*
- *Supporting work-based learning;*
- *Improving job and career results; and*
- *Other priorities as articulated in guidance.*

This waiver aligns with not only the Department of Labor's priorities, but also with those of the State of Illinois. Within the Illinois Unified Plan, are examples of initiatives demonstrating the importance of ensuring career and work readiness at all levels, and how Illinois is moving toward strategies that integrally tie education to workforce development. Expanding the career pathway opportunities across the education and workforce system by allowing additional funds toward in-school youth, supports our common goal to expand career pathway opportunities through more accelerated work-based training while aligning and integrating programs of study that lead to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings. This alignment will truly address the P-20 pipeline by providing necessary career readiness and occupational skills necessary to succeed in the job market.

As Illinois continues the engagement of educational institutions to create a job-driven education and training system, the state will be making significant and strategic system improvements that address workforce development needs through flexible, responsive, and progressive programs informed by labor market information. Not only will this continue to occur through the 48 comprehensive community colleges and multi-college centers, but the state will also be expanding the reach to integrate meaningful career readiness programs and work-based learning models that focus on high demand occupations for students and workers at all levels.

Individuals impacted by the waiver

Describe which populations the waiver will benefit, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment.

Both the education and workforce system will be able to provide the benefits of this waiver to our youth with barriers. This includes at-risk youth population, educational entities, American Job Centers (AJC) and subcontracted service provider staff, employers, parents, and school counselors.

Process for monitoring progress in implementation

Describes the processes used to monitor the progress in implementing the waiver.

The State will use the following approach for monitoring progress in implementation:

State staff involved with the administration of youth programming will provide ongoing technical assistance and oversight as it relates to the appropriateness and the effectiveness of this

waiver. This information will be submitted regularly to the IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee.

Annual WIOA on-site programmatic reviews will include an evaluation of the impact the waivers have on programmatic goals and outcomes.

Additionally, the IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee will have the responsibility of ensuring the specific goals and outcomes achieved by the waiver are realized. Furthermore, the information gathered from the waiver will inform new or changes to policy as well as provide best practices.

This strategy ensures that the goals described above, as well as those outlined in the State's Unified Plan and the IWIB Strategic Plan, are consistent with established objectives of the WIOA and federal and state regulations.

Notice to affected local boards

Address how local boards affected by the waiver were notified of the request.

Local Boards via Board members and/or Board staff as well as WIOA partners and other interested stakeholders participate in policy development. Additionally, LWIBs receive the opportunity to participate in public comment period that includes webinars.

Public Comment

Provide a description of the proactive solicitation of public comments. At a minimum, post the proposed waiver request to the state's official website for comment. Ideally, develop a targeted outreach strategy to collect input and comment from all affected stakeholders. Submit any comments or concerns collected in this manner and the outcome of the state's review of the public comments received.

This waiver request was posted to the WIOA State Plan page of the Illinois workNet website. Public comments received will be included in the attachment with all comments.

Waiver Impact

Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report. The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

The IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee will have the responsibility of ensuring the specific goals and outcomes achieved by the waiver are realized. Furthermore, the information gathered from the waiver will inform new or changes to policy as well as provide best practices. Outcomes of the waiver will be reported in the WIOA Annual Report.

WAIVER REQUEST - TIMING OF LWIA REALIGNMENT

Statutory and/or regulatory requirements to be waived. Indicate which part of the WIOA or the regulations the state would like to waive.

The State of Illinois is seeking a waiver from the following Section(s):

WIOA Sec. 106(a)(2) and 20 CFR § 679.210 (preamble)

“In accordance with WIOA Section 106(a)(2), a single local area may not be split across two planning regions. Local areas must be contiguous to be a planning region and effectively align economic and workforce development activities and resources.”

The state is coordinating a demand-driven strategic planning process across education, workforce and economic development at the state, regional and local levels. Illinois has been proactive in coordinating regional planning with the implementation of the WIOA requirements. These efforts led to the state identifying meaningful planning regions that resulted in the 10 Economic Development Regions (EDRs). To support this process, Illinois coordinated regional planning including guidelines, regional and statewide planning events as well as coordinated technical assistance resources as part of the development of the initial regional plans in 2016. With the release of the final WIOA rules, planning resources were updated in 2017.

Illinois has ten planning regions that meet the requirements of WIOA Sec. 106(a)(2) and 20 CFR § 679.210. Furthermore, all twenty-two of Illinois’ Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIA) met the requirements for initial designation based on analysis of fiscal integrity and WIOA performance. However, five of these LWIAs (4/Ogle, 11/Livingston, 19/DeWitt, 21/Calhoun, Jersey and 23/Douglas) split between different planning regions.

The WIOA Assessment report, issued by the US Department of Labor on June 28, 2017 requires the State, in conjunction with the local boards and elected officials, to identify a regional structure that does not result in any single local area being split between two or more regions. While a regional structure that complies with WIOA is in place; additional time is needed to complete the consultation and realignment process.

A waiver from this requirement will provide Illinois additional time for the state to implement the regional planning structure that is compliant with the requirements of WIOA Section 106(a) and 20 CFR Part 679 Subpart D. and will ensure that Illinois’ workforce system remains aligned to the employment and training systems that are tailored specifically to regional economies.

Specifically, the state is requesting until 2020 plan submission to comply with the regional planning directive. Additionally, at that time the state will issue update regional planning guidelines.

Actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers. Describe the actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers.

The Illinois Workforce Board and WIOA Core partners established a working group to develop a plan of action to address this issue. The working group met in the summer of 2017 to review the regional planning data, identify a compliant regional planning structure, and develop a local consultation process with the Governor's Office, WIOA state agencies, state board, state legislature, chief elected officials, local board members, and other interested stakeholders.

Illinois' regional data has been updated and based on regional economic and labor market data that includes:

- commuting patterns;
- numbers of employers and jobs supported regionally;
- projections of regional job growth; and
- targeted industry growth patterns.

As a next step, the state will be conducting focus groups to analyze the data and garner feedback from the chief elected officials, local workforce boards, and other interested stakeholder groups which will then inform a plan for realignment. The State of Illinois will follow the appeals process that is consistent with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), WIOA final administrative rule, and the State of Illinois WIOA policies.

Goals and expected programmatic outcomes of waiver. Describe and specify how the waiver will help the state achieve an identified strategic goal or set of goals that it has outlined in its State Plan. If possible and appropriate the type of waiver requested, provide quantifiable projections for programmatic outcomes that will result from the waiver.

The strategies and activities listed below are part of six policy priorities within the Illinois WIOA Unified Plan and speak specifically to regional alignment as identified in this waiver request and provide the support for planning and sector partnerships.

Strategy 1: Coordinate Demand-Driven Strategic Planning at the State and Regional Levels.

Activity 1.1: Develop Strategic Indicators, Benchmarks and Related Planning Data Resources

Activity 1.2: Establish Regional Planning Areas

Activity 1.3: Conduct Integrated Regional Planning

Strategy 2: Support Employer-Driven Regional Sector Initiatives

Activity 2.1: Promote Employer-Driven Regional Sector Partnerships

Activity 2.2: Promote Sector-Based Business Services and Employer Initiatives

Providing additional time to realign the five counties will allow the state, regional and local partners the time that is needed to consult with local elected officials and complete the

programmatic and administrative realignment of the impacted LWIAs in an orderly fashion that will ultimately benefit the WIOA customers and strengthen Illinois' regional planning structure.

Department of Labor's policy priorities

Describe how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:

- ***Supporting employer engagement;***
- ***Connecting education and training strategies;***
- ***Supporting work-based learning;***
- ***Improving job and career results; and***
- ***Other priorities as articulated in guidance.***

Illinois' current regional and local structure align with the four identified purposes of Title I of WIOA priorities involving activities at the regional level which include:

- enhancing the strategic role for states and elected officials, and Local Workforce Innovation Boards in the public workforce system by increasing flexibility to tailor services to meet employer and worker needs at State, regional, and local levels;
- supporting the alignment of the workforce investment, education, and economic development systems in support of a comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality workforce development system at the Federal, state, and local and regional levels;
- improving the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development efforts by promoting the use of industry and sector partnerships, career pathways, and regional service delivery strategies
- increasing the prosperity and economic growth of workers, employers, communities, regions, and States.

Individuals impacted by the waiver. Describe which populations the waiver will benefit, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment.

This waiver benefits the entire state workforce system, reduces unnecessary administrative expenses caused by realignment, and keeps consistent with current Economic Development Region and Local Workforce Innovation Area structures. Those specifically impacted include:

1. employers;
2. job seekers, including WIOA priority population groups;
3. local area one-stop partners and delivery systems;
4. Local Workforce Development Boards;
5. economic development entities; and

6. the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board.

Process for monitoring progress in implementation. Describes the processes used to monitor the progress in implementing the waiver.

The State will use the following approach for monitoring progress in implementation:

1. State staff involved with the administration governance provisions will provide ongoing technical assistance and oversight as it relates to the appropriateness and the effectiveness of this waiver. This information will be submitted regularly to the IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee.
2. Annual WIOA on-site programmatic reviews will include evaluation review of the impact the waivers have on programmatic goals and outcomes.
3. Additionally, the IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee will have the responsibility of ensuring the specific goals and outcomes achieved by the waiver are realized. Furthermore, the information gathered from the waiver will inform new or changes to policy as well as provide best practices.

This strategy ensures that the goals described above, as well as those outlined in the State's Unified Plan and the IWIB Strategic Plan, are consistent with established objectives of the WIOA and federal and state regulations.

Notice to affected local boards. Address how local boards affected by the waiver were notified of the request.

Local Boards via Board members and/or Board staff, as well as WIOA partners and other interested stakeholders participate in policy development. Additionally, LWIBs receive the opportunity to participate in a public comment period that includes webinars.

Public Comment. Provide a description of the proactive solicitation of public comments. At a minimum, post the proposed waiver request to the state's official website for comment. Ideally, develop a targeted outreach strategy to collect input and comment from all affected stakeholders. Submit any comments or concerns collected in this manner and the outcome of the state's review of the public comments received.

This waiver request was posted to the WIOA State Plan page of the Illinois workNet website. Public comments received will be included in the attachment with all comments.

Waiver Impact. Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report. The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

The IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee will have the responsibility of ensuring the specific goals and outcomes achieved by the waiver are realized. Furthermore, the information gathered from the waiver will inform new or changes to policy as well as provide best practices. Outcomes of the waiver will be reported in the WIOA Annual Report.

WAIVER REQUEST – AMEND THE DEFINITION OF INCUMBENT WORKER BY ELIMINATING OR REDUCING THE SIX-MONTH EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENT

Statutory and/or regulatory requirements to be waived

Indicate which part of the WIOA or the regulations the state would like to waive.

The State of Illinois is seeking a waiver from 20 CFR 680.780 to amend the definition of “incumbent worker” by either reducing or, preferably, eliminating the 6-month employment requirement. Several local workforce areas collaborated to jointly ask the State to submit this waiver request.

Actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers

N/A

Describe the actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers.

There are currently no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. State of Illinois regulations and policy align with current federal law and regulations.

Goals and expected programmatic outcomes of waiver

Describe and specify how the waiver will help the state achieve an identified strategic goal or set of goals that it has outlined in its State Plan. If possible and appropriate the type of waiver requested, provide quantifiable projections for programmatic outcomes that will result from the waiver.

Illinois has long been a strong advocate of incumbent worker training as a means of improving the competitive position of workers and businesses. Our Unified State Plan places a strong emphasis on workforce system responsiveness to the needs of employers, and the 6-month requirement is an arbitrary barrier to using incumbent worker training to support Registered Apprenticeships, upskilling workers and keeping companies competitive.

A recent survey conducted by the local workforce boards indicates that in 2019:

- dozens of employer requests for incumbent worker training were denied due to this requirement
- Employers expressed frustration with being able to use incumbent worker training for some employees but not others if they are newly hired. (Local areas are aware they have flexibility to include new hires if they make up a minority of the training cohort.)

Employer comments

- “How do I create consistency among my seasoned workers and new hired workers as it pertains to training if they both don’t have access to training opportunities?”
- “It is unfortunate that we are doing apprenticeships and my new employees are not eligible to participate. It would be nice to be able to on-board someone and they can receive the same training to put them at the same level.”
- “One area that was lacking was being able to send newly hired colleagues for training. Our initial funding request included the creating of six new positions and the Electronic Medical Records training that would be required to ignite those positions to success [was denied].”
- “It seemed like a useless restriction, especially if a company wanted to train their entire workforce at the same time.”
- “Management is concerned with the 6-month requirement for the grant and whether or not we can meet. The candidates we would utilize are new hires (day one employees) and not fall under the guidelines. We intended to utilize the grant to be able to hire/increase the number of employees and offset the training costs with the funding. If you have guidance please pass along.”
- “[The six-month requirement] has directly affected [our company] in that ...individuals were excluded from training that directly affected their advancement and the overall well-being of the company.”
- The six-month requirement was detrimental to business engagement efforts because it creates an apparent arbitrary restriction that allows some workers to be trained and some not
- Potentially hundreds of incumbent workers were denied the ability to receive upskill training
- The requirement was detrimental to expanding the use of Registered Apprenticeships

Local Area Comments

- Employers are often hesitant to participate in workforce programs like our incumbent worker program, due to what they consider "bureaucratic red-tape". When an employer introduces new technology at their site, all employees that will work with that new technology need to be trained not just workers that have been employed 6 months or more. We like to encourage employers to expand in our workforce area, but then we penalize them with policies that exclude those new hires from eligibility.
- We're finally getting to a point where businesses are coming to us for incumbent worker training, and then we have to inform them that the new people they just hired can't be trained with the rest of the group, unless they pay for that person. It just gives the business community another reason to look at us as a "bureaucracy".

- The 6-month requirement has only recently become more of a sticking point as we are looking to promote apprenticeship in particular. We would like to be able to use WIOA Incumbent dollars to "kick start" apprenticeship within companies as a capacity-building effort. Unfortunately, there is no way to provide funding for onboarding and beginning apprenticeship for the vast majority of new hires (as they would have to be WIOA eligible to receive OJT or Customized Training). An apprenticeship funding model that doesn't start for the first six months is a non-starter for most employers who would otherwise be interested.
- The grant restriction does not allow consistency among all onboarded workers, it prohibits a macro approach to address a training issue, it segregates worker groups, and it does allow an employer to immediately address Workforce pain points when identified within an onboarding process.
- It has an impact on our flexibility, especially when it comes to serving newer/start-up businesses that may have few if any employees that have been at the company for six months. Also, would help garner more interest for work-based learning/apprenticeships/OJT's.
- While trying to find the best solutions for our customers, let's remove barriers and not restrict businesses from training up their workforce.
- We try and streamline the program as best as we can to make it attractive for the business and remain in conformance. Not having the 6-month employment requirement makes it an easier program to sell! That's a win-win for everyone!
- New hires, who are not otherwise eligible for OJT under WIOA, have to be put off because of this requirement. This is especially problematic for smaller companies that want to get their new people up to speed ASAP but don't have the revenue to pay for it themselves, or the employee cannot afford to pay for it. While the companies understand my limitations, it doesn't do much for us being able to build that needed relationship with them.
- The inability to include new hires is a real negative factor as, in this economy, many employers are having to hire people without at least some of the necessary job skills.

Goals

The overarching goal is to eliminate an arbitrary barrier to providing incumbent worker training to companies and workers struggling to stay competitive. Removing this barrier aligns directly with priorities espoused by the Department of Labor, the Governor's Executive Order #3, the Five- Year Economic Development Plan and WIOA Unified State Plan to:

- Be more responsive to the needs of businesses
- Support establishing long-term relationships between businesses and the workforce system
- Promote the expansion of Registered Apprenticeships to more businesses as a means to meet their workforce needs

- Provide upward mobility for workers into career pathways
- Promote increased use of work-based learning that allows workers to learn and earn at the same time.

Individuals Impacted by the Waiver

Individuals impacted by the waiver potentially include:

- *all disadvantaged populations that recently entered the workforce through support from community-based programs funded from sources other than WIOA*
- *newly hired workers that wish to enter a Registered Apprenticeship*
- *newly hired workers that wish to upskill their talents for improved job security.*

Outcomes

Illinois can effectively monitor the impact of the waiver through our existing Incumbent Worker Tracking System. A simple system modification can be deployed to require local areas to identify if a project includes workers that have been at the company less than six months. We will be able to track the companies and their location, sector and the number of workers trained in these projects that otherwise would have been denied.

Notice to affected local boards

Address how local boards affected by the waiver were notified of the request.

Local boards, working through their statewide organization, the Illinois Workforce Partnership, collectively approached the State to pursue this waiver request. The State's waiver request includes direct input provided by the local boards and employers in their respective local area.

Public Comment

Provide a description of the proactive solicitation of public comments. At a minimum, post the proposed waiver request to the state's official website for comment. Ideally, develop a targeted outreach strategy to collect input and comment from all affected stakeholders. Submit any comments or concerns collected in this manner and the outcome of the state's review of the public comments received.

This waiver request was posted to the WIOA State Plan page of the Illinois workNet website. As previously mentioned, this request originated with the local workforce boards. The association of local workforce leaders, the Illinois Workforce Partnership, submitted a formal public comment in support on behalf of all local boards. In addition, a small number of supportive comments were received from local workforce leaders. No comments in opposition to the waiver were received. All public comments related to this waiver are included in the attachment containing all input received.

Waiver Impact

Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report. The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

The IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee will have the responsibility of ensuring the specific goals and outcomes achieved by the waiver are realized. Furthermore, the information gathered from the waiver will inform new or changes to policy as well as provide best practices. Outcomes of the waiver will be reported in the WIOA Annual Report.

WAIVER REQUEST - CERTAIN ONE-STOP OPERATOR PAYMENT PROVISIONS

Agency: Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity on behalf of Illinois' WIOA Core and Required Partners.

Under the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor's (U.S. DOL) waiver authority outlined in Section 189(i)(3)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and 20 CFR § 679.600, the Secretary may waive certain provisions of WIOA Title I, Subtitles A, B, and E and provisions found in Sections 8-10 of the Wagner-Peyser Act. WIOA Section 189(i)(3)(B) and 20 CFR 679.620 identify elements that must be included in a waiver request.

As set forth in detail, below, the State of Illinois is seeking a waiver of this provision in 20 CFR § 618.890 in accordance with the requirements of 20 CFR § 679.620(d).

1. The statutory and/or regulatory requirements the state would like to waive

The state must clearly cite the statute and/or regulation(s) in its request and ensure that the citations refer to the specific elements the state wishes to waive.

The State of Illinois is seeking a waiver of the specific payment provisions outlined in Section 9.D *Implementation Phase* of Training and Employment Guidance Letter 15-16, Competitive Selection of One-Stop Operators (TEGL 15-16).

The Local Workforce Areas follow the State's established guidelines that allow the cost of the one-stop operator to be included as a shared cost that is included in the annual Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Budget. This waiver would also allow the MOU budget to serve as evidence of the exchange of funds between the Local Workforce Development Board and the One-Stop Operator (OSO) in Local Workforce Areas where a consortium of partners was selected as the OSO

BACKGROUND

The State of Illinois has issued guidelines to fulfill the WIOA requirement that the Governor issue guidance to State and local partners for negotiating cost sharing, service access, service delivery and other matters essential to the establishment of effective local workforce development systems under WIOA (20 CFR § 678.705). To comply with this requirement, the State of Illinois has issued *Governor's Guidelines to State and Local Program Partners*

Negotiating Costs and Services Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, Revision 3 (Governor’s Guidelines), see Attachment I.

The State of Illinois has invested considerable resources in the development of the Governor’s Guidelines. The State of Illinois also went through significant effort to get the State of Illinois Comptroller to recognize the MOU as a valid contract that documents and supports state payments of one-stop infrastructure and shared costs. The State of Illinois recognizes that the MOU cost negotiations is an administrative burden at the State and local levels; therefore, efforts have been made to make cost sharing procedures as efficient as possible. The State of Illinois has recognized the One-Stop Operator Cost as a “shared cost” that is included in the annual MOU budget negotiations.

The US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Region V issued monitoring reports in 2019 indicating that specific Local Workforce Areas did not meet the One-Stop Operator procurement requirements as outlined below:

[LWIAs] did not award funds to the competitively selected One-Stop Operators despite both Requests for Proposals (RFPs) identifying an up-to funding level for the chosen bidder. The report indicates that a consortium of partners was selected as the winning bidder of the OSO procurement. Each partner in the consortium that won the bid is charging its respective Federal grant for the time spent on OSO functions rather than the Local WDBs awarding the funds to the entities that were selected.

ETA’s guidance indicates that funds must be awarded to the winning bidder as part of the overall contractual arrangement. The ETA’s Training and Employment Guidance Letter 15-16, Competitive Selection of One-Stop Operators, provides evidence of the intended exchange of funds between the Local WDB and the OSO. Section 6, page 3, indicates that OSOs are considered subrecipients of Federal funds and must follow the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200, including the contractual provisions at 2 CFR 200.326. In Section 9.C., page 13, the TEGl indicates that, during the contract negotiation phase, payment details and frequency must be determined. And, in this same section at part D., it indicates, “Payments and authorized budget modifications to the one-stop operator must be timely and consistent with payment requirements under 2 CFR part 200 and 2 CFR part 290[0]. Likewise, invoices from the one-stop operator must be submitted timely and contain the documentation outlined in its contract or agreement....”

The Local Workforce Areas use the Annual MOU as a valid contract to support the payment of all of the one-stop infrastructure and shared costs – including the cost of the OSO. Requiring the OSO cost to be removed from the MOU takes away one of the fundamental reasons why the State and local areas go through the annual MOU budget negotiation process. Section 678.760(e) of the WIOA Final Rule also requires that *any shared costs agreed upon by the one-stop partners must be included in the MOU*. Furthermore, Training Employment Guidance Letter 17-16 establishes that

“the infrastructure agreement (IFA) contains the infrastructure costs budget, which is an integral component of the overall one-stop operating budget. The other component on the one-

*stop operating budget consists of additional costs, which include applicable career services, and may include shared operating costs and shared services. While each of these components covers different cost categories, an operating budget would be incomplete if any of these cost categories were omitted, as all components are necessary to maintain a fully functioning and successful local one-stop delivery system. **Therefore, the Departments strongly recommend that the Local WDBs, one-stop partners, and CEOs negotiate the IFA, along with additional costs, when developing the operating budget for the local one-stop delivery system. The overall one-stop operating budget must be included in the MOU.*** [emphasis added]

In several Illinois LWIAs, the Local Workforce Innovation Board (LWIB) oversees the budget for the WIOA activities; however, it is the fiscal agent that issues the WIOA payments. This finding is, in effect, prescribing the accounting treatment of the OSO costs. To require a cash payment from the LWIB to the OSO and to then permit this cash payment to be refunded to the LWIB as a “reimbursement” would result in unnecessary financial transactions. This could also lead to a situation where the LWIA would have to issue a check to itself. This finding also appears to limit the LWIA’s ability to use the allowable leveraged resources to support the OSO partners.

- WIOA Section 121 states, “The local grant recipient or an entity designated under subclause (II) shall disburse the grant funds for workforce investment activities at the direction of the local board, pursuant to requirements of this title.”
- The Joint Final Rule at 20 CFR § 678.715, affirms that WIOA sec. 121(d)(1) delegates the majority of the authority to set these policies regarding the payment of one-stop operators, to the LWIB.

Finally, the finding references the contract provisions at 2 CFR 200.326 (Appendix 2 to the Uniform Guidance), but the contract provisions do not require that the payment details and frequency be included in a subaward.

- 2 CFR 200.331 in the Uniform Guidance does not require pass-through entities to include payment details and frequency in a subaward.
- The Uniform Guidance does not define leveraged resources, which has been defined by ETA as all resources used by the grantee to support grant activity and outcomes, whether those resources meet the standards applied to match or not.

2. Actions the state has undertaken to remove state or local statutory or regulatory barriers

The state must provide a discussion of the steps it has taken to remove any potential obstacles in the waiver request as appropriate. Quite often, state or local policies do not present a conflict for the request, and a simple statement indicating that there are no state or local barriers is sufficient.

The State of Illinois requested a meeting with the appropriate U.S. Department of Labor staff to review the finding outlined above and the State of Illinois response. The U.S. Department of Labor’s follow up letter did not respond to this request; therefore, the State is requesting this

waiver. If a waiver is not required, the State requests reconsideration of the U.S. Department of Labor's interpretation and application of the regulation as outlined in the findings.

There are currently no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. State of Illinois regulations and policies align with the State's interpretation of the federal law and regulations.

3. State strategic goals sought through a waiver

The state must precisely articulate the goals it seeks to achieve by requesting a waiver. The state must also discuss how these goals relate to its Unified or Combined State Plan.

The goal of this waiver is to insure compliance with the technical requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and TEG 15-16 by specifically allowing the State of Illinois to use the procedures outlined in the Governor's Guidelines as evidence of the exchange of funds between the Local Workforce Development Board and the One- Stop Operator.

The Governor's Guidelines are part of the regulatory framework that supports the delivery of workforce, education and business services. The Governor's Guidelines require all Federally-funded programs authorized under WIOA in Illinois to collaborate to optimize the quality of services provided in all local workforce areas throughout the State.

To effectively collaborate, required partners in Illinois must commit to:

- *Negotiate in good faith the commitments of each required partner to provide access to services and programs, as well as to share in the costs of the local one-stop delivery system;*
- *Share necessary data and customer information;*
- *Train frontline staff to make them more knowledgeable about other programs under WIOA and to improve the efficiency of referrals;*
- *Plan and act strategically based on a common understanding of regional economies, key sectors, workforce demographics and employer needs; and*
- *Leverage program resources where possible to the mutual benefit of customers and programs.*

This waiver will also support the principles outlined within Illinois' Unified Plan, which strives to promote employer-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. These principles include:

- *Cross-agency Collaboration and Alignment* - Developing career pathways and stackable credentials will demand collaboration and alignment across agencies that contribute to Illinois' overall talent pipeline. There should be a focus on improving the strategic

connections across all components and levels of the education and workforce systems to ensure no “dead ends” exist.

- *Integrated Service Delivery* - Enhanced collaboration and alignment across state agencies at a strategic level should lead to better service delivery integration. Multiple state agencies and partners are positioned to support the success of individuals and businesses. Technology and integrated data systems can help illustrate those interrelationships and position the system to collaborate across agencies to deliver the right services at the right time.
- *Access and Opportunity for All Populations* - Coordinated and comprehensive services can help targeted populations prepare for and advance along a career pathway. Connecting individuals with relevant supports, such as transportation, child care and transition services can enable the system to be responsive to the needs of individuals’ workforce readiness.
- *Focus on Continuous Improvement and Innovation* - The system should establish mechanisms for continual assessment of system performance and opportunities for improvement, as well as for encouraging innovation and disseminating best practices. This includes the continued enhancement of non-traditional methods for delivering education and training. Additionally, the growing role of entrepreneurship and its contributions to employment and economic growth will be an outcome of continuous improvement and innovation.

4. Projected programmatic outcomes resulting from implementation of the waiver

The state must provide an estimate of how the waiver will improve outcomes or provide other tangible benefits for jobseekers or employers. States have the discretion to determine how to measure a waiver’s success and the specific data sources it intends to use to evaluate its impact.

The waiver would bring Illinois into compliance with the technical payment provision of TEGL 15-16. The State of Illinois has identified that the cost of the One-Stop Operator (OSO) is an allowable shared cost that is documented in the annual local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) budget. The waiver would allow the MOU budget to be a mechanism for exchanging funds that could include the cost of the OSO as outlined in Illinois’ Governor’s Guidelines.

5. Individuals, groups, or populations affected by the waiver

States must describe the potential impact of a waiver on various system stakeholders, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations, persons with barriers to employment, or businesses.

The waiver will positively impact the state and local partners that are responsible for administering the required WIOA programs in a one-stop. This waiver will provide the flexibility that is needed to be in compliance with the OSO regulations. A denial of the waiver will require additional time and money to develop additional payment procedures and protocols. The denial of the waiver combined with a narrow interpretation of WIOA’s technical governance requirements will have a significant cumulative impact on the State and local

workforce areas' ability to effectively administer the programs for the benefit of job seekers and businesses.

6. Plans for monitoring waiver implementation, including collection of waiver outcome information

States must describe how they intend to oversee effective waiver implementation and any unique protocols that may be used in their waiver requests.

The State of Illinois will monitor this waiver as part of the annual review of the Governor's Guidelines. Technical adjustments will be made as appropriate to ensure compliance with the regulations and the implementation of Illinois service integration strategies.

7. Assurance of state posting of the request for public comment and notification to affected local workforce development boards

WIOA does not prescribe a specific amount of time for states to post a potential waiver for comment, but it does require the state to demonstrate a reasonable opportunity for public review and comment by all stakeholders, including businesses and organized labor. Submit any comments or concerns collected in this manner and the outcome of the state's review of the public comments received. The state must also provide affected local boards with notice and opportunity to comment on the proposed waiver.

Illinois' waiver request was posted on the website for comment and review by the required parties and the public. This included Local Workforce Boards via Board members and/or Board staff as well as WIOA partners and other interested stakeholders.

Program-specific Requirements for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs

a. Aligning of Content Standards

Describe how the eligible agency has aligned its 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, as amended (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.

Illinois' strategic plan for implementing standards-aligned curriculum and instruction began in 2014 with the integration of 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 Fiscal Year 2017, the Content Standards for English Language Learners (ELL) were updated to align with the Office of Career Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) English Language Proficiency (ELP) and Illinois Adult education standards (which are aligned to the state's K-12 Learning Standards). The ELP standards ensure that all adult ELL's can obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency through integrated workplace preparation activities, mathematics, and digital literacy.

In a continued effort to sustain high-quality curriculum and instruction, the ICCB oversees the development and implementation of Content Specialist training to fulfill the mission of the CCRS sustainability plan by utilizing the expertise of the experts in the delivery of technical assistance and coaching to the instructional teams of the local adult education program. Additionally, the ICCB has created a five-year implementation and sustainability plan instituting 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. These trainings ensure integration of 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 with the CCR standards. This holistic and evidence-based training aligns with Goal #3, Strengthen College and Career Readiness, from Expanding Career Pathway Opportunities in Adult Education, Strategic Directions for Illinois, the ICCB's strategic five-year plan.

Standards Proficient Instruction across all aspects of adult literacy education. It is the goal of ICCB to create a system of CCR content specialist/master teachers in Language Arts, Math, Reading, and English as Second Language that will provide regional training, technical assistance, and guidance to instructors in their region, thus ensuring statewide rigorous standards-based instruction in all programs. The levels of standard proficient professionals include ABE/ASE Specialist, ABE/ASE Master Teacher, Career Navigator Pathway, Special Learning Needs, and English as a Second Language Standards Proficient Instructor.

b. Local Activities

Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.

Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)

- **Adult education;**
- **Literacy;**
- **Workplace adult education and literacy activities;**
- **Family literacy activities;**
- **English language acquisition activities;**
- **Integrated English literacy and civics education;**
- **Workforce preparation activities; or**
- **Integrated education and training that—**
 1. **Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and**
 2. **Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.**

***Special Rule.** Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.*

In 2017, the ICCB convened an adult education taskforce to create an Adult Education Strategic Plan. The 25-member taskforce represented critical stakeholders including, legislators; state commerce and economic opportunity agencies; employment security and human services agencies; Adult Education system leaders and practitioners; president of higher education institutions, representatives of workforce development and philanthropy; K-12 educators' and community-based organizations. The vision for the five-year strategic plan, 2018-2023, is as follows:

In partnership with other stakeholders, we will create learning opportunities that align with statewide education, training, and employment strategies to ensure all adult learners have access

to and success across services that are cohesive, coordinated, and innovative to promote better economic opportunities, greater equity, and sustainable career pathways.

The Adult Education Strategic Plan is aligned with the Governor's Executive Order 2019-3, the Perkins V Unified plan, Illinois Unified Plan, the Workforce Board's Strategic Plan and the Workforce Education Strategic Plan. Combined, these plans create the framework for achieving adult education and literacy activities under the following four goals:

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Goal 1: Improve Outcomes by Scaling Effective Models and Strategies across the System

- Building, expanding and scaling comprehensive career pathways systems, and create the conditions across every Adult Education program to find breakthrough ways of expanding these proven models.

Goal 2: Increase Postsecondary Transitions and Credential Attainment

- Recognizing that access to postsecondary education is not enough, but also ensures students are accessing postsecondary education and earning credentials that are in demand.

Goal 3: Strengthen College and Career Readiness

- College and career readiness for underprepared adult students is critical to overall success. Increasingly, students entering the workforce are discovering that they need critical knowledge and skills that are used in the workplace.

Goal 4: Develop Life-long Career Pathway Systems & Enabling Technologies

- Strategizing for career and life options while meeting the diverse and context-specific learning needs of various age groups, including the acquisition of basic literacy, and technical skills through both formal education and effective alternative pathways to learning.

In the spring of 2020, the ICCB will hold a competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) soliciting statewide eligible providers to apply for funding to provide Title II Adult Education and Literacy services as aligned with the Unified State Plan and other education and workforce plans. Previously, eighty-one providers were approved to provide adult education and literacy services for Fiscal Year 18. Each provider will be granted continued funding based upon meeting the determined measures of demonstrated effectiveness.

A new competitive NOFO will be published in the Spring of 2020.

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

1. Be an Eligible Applicant, as listed below:

- Local educational agencies (LEA)
- Community–Based Organizations (CBO) or Faith-Based Organizations (FBO)
- Volunteer Literacy Organizations
- Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)
- Public or Private nonprofit agencies
- Libraries
- Public-housing authorities
- Nonprofit institutions that are described previously and have the ability to provide adult education and literacy services to eligible individuals
- Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries or authorities described previously
- Partnership between an employer and an entity described above
- Other applicants of demonstrated effectiveness

2. Respond to the NOFO by the due date.

3. Complete all required portions of the application.

4. Meet all deadlines and other elements as specified in the NOFO.

5. Meet all eligibility requirements.

The past effectiveness of an eligible applicant in improving the literacy skills of eligible adults is a strong factor in the delivery of adult education instruction and supportive services. In addition, the ICCB will ensure all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for funding. Grant proposals will be considered based on the following criteria as outlined in WIOA Title II the workforce

The ICCB recognizes the following activities are allowable under Adult Education and Literacy under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training.

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 will be required to address the thirteen considerations under federal law and one state consideration. Applications will be evaluated using a rubric that assigns point values for each proposed activity as outlined in the proposal.

1. The documented need of the eligible applicant to serve individuals in the community who are most in need of adult education and literacy services and those who are in need of career pathway services, including individuals who have literacy skills or who are English language learners (i.e., literacy statistics, regional and local needs as identified under the Unified State Plan, etc.).
2. The applicant demonstrates the ability to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including those with learning disabilities.
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 applicants proposed adult education services and activities demonstrate an alignment with local plans and services and with local one-stop partners.
5. The applicant demonstrates the use of 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 applicant demonstrates the effectiveness in providing instruction in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics and English language acquisition and is based on best practices, scientific valid research and the state standards.
7. The program activities effectively employ advances in technology including the use of computers as a part of instruction including distance education to increase the quality of learning which leads to improved performance.
8. The applicant proposes activities that 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 post-secondary education and training, advance in employment and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
9. The applicant proposes activities that are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, support staff and administrators who meet state guidelines, have access to high-quality professional development.

10. The applicant's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, post-secondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce investment boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways.

11. The applicant offers flexible schedules and supportive services (such as childcare and transportation) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs.

12. The applicant 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. (state consideration)

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 in one or more of the following methods: direct instruction, distance education, or a hybrid or blended education. These instructional activities are important to the success of the program and the students served. The purpose of Adult Education is to create a partnership among the Federal Government, States, and localities to provide, on a voluntary basis, adult education and literacy activities, in order to:

- assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency;
- assist adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that are necessary to becoming full partners in the educational development of their children; and lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family;
- assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through career pathways; and
- assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in improving their reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English; and mathematics skills; and -acquiring an understanding of the American system of Government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

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

Adult Education

- 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. This curriculum, as well as the instruction, must increase a student's ability to read, write, speak and perform mathematics. This should also lead to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or high school equivalency; and transition to post-secondary education and training; or employment. Beginning level courses cover grade zero through the third-grade competency level. The intermediate level courses cover fourth-grade competency through the eight-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.
- 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. This curriculum, as well as the instruction, must increase a student's ability to read, write and speak and perform mathematics. This should also lead to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or high school equivalency; and transition to post-secondary education and training; or employment. 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. The curriculum and instruction are designed to help eligible individuals who are English Language Learners achieve competence in reading, speaking, comprehension and mathematics skills that lead to attainment of a secondary school diploma or high school equivalency; and transition to post-secondary education and training; or employment. 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 (e.g., the OCTAE's Employability Skills Framework), workplace literacy, family literacy, bridge instruction and Integrated English Literacy/Civics (IEL/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.

- Workforce Preparation Activities/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 for the level of instruction.
- 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, in combination with Integrated Education and Training programming. 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 IEL/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), Housing (HO) and 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.
- 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 post-secondary 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 post-secondary education and employment in high-growth industries. The ICCB 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 post-secondary 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 post-secondary 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/occupational 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, referrals to individual support services, e.g., transportation and childcare.
- Integrated Education and Training (IET) is comprised of three components: adult education and literacy activities, workforce preparation activities and workforce training. Each of these components is offered concurrently for educational and career advancement. Illinois currently has two models of integrated education and training The ICAPS (Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System) Model 1 and Model 2.
 - ICAPS Model 1 utilizes partnerships between Adult Education providers and college and university workforce and career training programs that may not be funded through Perkins or the Illinois Community College Board. This model also provides concurrent enrollment and instruction in a team-taught environment with comprehensive student supports resulting in skill level gains, high school equivalency certifications, college credit, and college and industry-recognized credentials.
 - The ICAPS Model 2 also utilizes partnerships between Adult Education providers and workforce and career training programs that may or may not be tied to a specific postsecondary institution. This model allows for the participation of community-based and faith-based organizations, local school districts and educational authorities, regional offices of education, and other state-funded Adult Education providers and partnership with corporate and continuing education divisions at community colleges, Local Workforce Innovation Boards, independent and governmental workforce training agencies, as well as individual employers and industry-based training programs. This model also provides integrated instruction and comprehensive student supports resulting in skill level gains, high school equivalency certifications, and industry-recognized credentials as well as the option for employer-specific training programs.
- 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 post-secondary 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)/ and/or Integrated Literacy and Civics Education (IL/CE) programs.

- 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 Literacy (AEL) funds. The fourth component—child education—must be funded by an appropriate child education partner.
- Literacy coordination may include coordination, tutor training, tutor scheduling and other support activities that promote student learning gains and may include volunteer literacy. Literacy services must be in conjunction with Adult Education and Literacy instructional programming provided by trained volunteers to target population students. 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 AEL funded class. Instructional hours may not be claimed for services provided by volunteer tutors.
- Workplace Adult Education and Literacy may include coordination of workplace education projects that are designed to meet the unique needs of participating workers and employers. Workplace Adult Education and Literacy refers to an individual’s 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 Adult Education and 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 Literacy funds. All other rules of the AEL 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).

Allowable Support Services Activities:

- A. Student transportation services are for students enrolled in Adult Education and Literacy eligible activities. Every effort should be made to coordinate these services with other entities within the community.
- B. Childcare is the care of children during the time an adult education student is engaged in eligible adult education and literacy instructional activities. The student must be the primary caregiver of the child. Every effort should be made to coordinate these services with other entities within the community.
- C. Guidance and counseling are activities with students which may include: (1) Learning styles inventories, (2) Evaluating the abilities of students, (3) Assisting students to make their own educational and career pathway choices, including career awareness and development activities, etc. (4) Assisting students in personal and social development, (5) Assisting staff members in planning and conducting guidance programs and (6) Providing transition services that will lead to post-secondary education and training, bridge programs, integrated education and training programs, employment and other activities of statewide significance. Social work activities include: (1) Improvement of students' attendance, (2) Interventions to assist students dealing with the problems involving home, school, and community, (3) Provision of referral assistance and (4) Retention strategies.
- D. Assistive and adaptive equipment or special printed materials are for adult education and literacy students with special learning needs.
- E. Assessment and testing are activities to measure skill gains of individual students enrolled in eligible adult education and literacy activities through the use of the approved assessments for Illinois Adult Education and Literacy. However, other diagnostic assessments designed to place students in appropriate and eligible adult education and literacy instruction are allowable.

Special Rule

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to

using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

c. Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals

Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

- **Adult education and literacy activities;**
- **Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;**
- **Secondary school credit;**
- **Integrated education and training;**
- **Career pathways;**
- **Concurrent enrollment;**
- **Peer tutoring; and**
- **Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.**

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

The state agency allocates funds to eligible correctional institutions using the same grant process criteria as the other eligible providers under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and carries the same provisions for direct and equitable access. The same criterion used to determine an applicant's eligibility under Section 231 also applies to all applicants of demonstrated effectiveness listed under Section 203.5, including Correctional Education Institutions. Each applicant will be evaluated using the same rubric and scoring process. Priority will be given to applicants who provide services to incarcerated individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of enrolling in the instructional program.

Eligible instructional activities and services are provided in correctional institutions throughout the state. The services provided include an assessment of an individual's educational functioning levels to determine mandated adult education and literacy instructional programming needed in

reading, writing, math and speaking to earn a High School Equivalency (HSE) Certificate or High school credit as well as the acquisition of the English language.

The ICCB funds adult education in correctional institutions and is designed to provide 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 post-secondary 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. Special Note: Secondary School Credit programming is not currently provided through correctional education with AEFL funds, however, this provision may be considered in the future.

Through partnerships, adult education programming will align its educational services with the labor market needs to determine jobs without criminal history restrictions. Using effective models of re-entry and workplace skills instruction like the Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center and Logan Correctional Center, the ICCB will work with the Illinois Department of Corrections to develop and scale effective instructional practices to prepare returning citizens for employment upon release. The ICCB will work with core and required partners 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.

d. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program

Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, including how 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.

Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be 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.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

The State will use Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IEL/CE) funds 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. Adults include professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries. Of the participants enrolled in an Integrated English and Civics Education program, 60% will be enrolled in an integrated education and training program as identified under WIOA Title II. Programs will also be required to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

The ICCB will hold a new IELCE competition in the spring 2020 for FY2021 through FY2025. The current grantees who competed successfully under the current competition will continue activities through June 30, 2020. Following the new competition in the spring of 2020, those who are successfully approved as providers may be considered for continued funding through FY2025. For continued funding, successful applicants will be required to submit a non-competitive continuation application annually. Continued funding will be contingent upon the availability and a sufficient appropriation of both federal and state resources, the applicant's demonstrated effectiveness in serving the target population and achieving the required performance and programmatic outcomes; and the ability to meet all grant requirements.

A. The state will evaluate the applications under Section 243 based upon the ability to deliver blended English Language Acquisition (ELA)/Civics as a part of instruction as well as each applicant must address the required competencies as listed below in item B, and concurrent enrollment in an Integrated Education and Training (including Workforce Preparation Skills) instruction. Sixty percent of those enrolled must be in a IET program. Programs may offer instruction in partnership with other entities in order to achieve the requirements of the law. For example: A program (community-based organization (CBO)) may decide to deliver contextualized instruction in their literacy program and another program (CBO or community college) may provide the related training activities or workforce preparation activities. Applications will also be evaluated on how well instruction is connected to in-demand industries.

B. As part of this requirement, Illinois Adult Education requires those enrolled in Integrated English Literacy Civics (IEL/Civics) to demonstrate competency in achieving outcomes. The state has developed competencies in the following areas and includes the Democratic Process, Community Resources, U.S. School System, Housing, Employment and Consumer Economics. The goal of IEL/Civics is to provide integrated programs of service that incorporate 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 as well as the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

C. Other activities of statewide significance will be added to ensure compliance with achievement of Section 243.

Special Note: Programs that provide civics education only in conjunction with English Literacy instruction must do so with under Section 231.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education activities will be funded in combination with integrated education and training activities. A funding model requiring IEL/CE learners to be co-enrolled in an IET, with progressive numbers of ELL learners in IET programs throughout the continuation years. Sixty percent of learners enrolled in an IEL/CE program must be enrolled in an IET program. Additional funding requirements will include considerations for the number of eligible individuals enrolled, the number of competencies earned and IET enrollment. IELCE activities will be awarded to providers that address how their programs will:

- 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 leads to economic self-sufficiency;
- integrate with the local workforce development systems to carry out the activities of the program;
- address the civic competencies outlined below;
- demonstrate the population need in the area; and the
- integration of Integrated education training and workforce preparation skills within the program.

The same criterion used to determine an applicant's eligibility under Section 231 also applies to all applicants of demonstrated effectiveness listed under Section 203.5. Each applicant will be evaluated using a rubric and scoring process that is in accordance with the activities established under Section 243 and will also include the thirteen considerations under law as well as one consideration under state guidelines.

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 IEL/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. Each applicant must address the required competencies as listed

above and will integrate Integrated Education and Training and Workforce Preparation Skills. Priority will be given to those programs that provide Integrated Education programs and Workforce Preparation Skills as a part of instructional programming as well as partnering with other entities in the delivery of services.

Special Note: Programs that provide civics education only in conjunction with English Literacy instruction must do so under Section 231 and must use state funding only.

e. 1. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA

e. State Leadership

Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA.

- The Illinois Community College Board (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 system ensuring integrated service delivery and employment engagement. The ICCB will partner with the National Governors Association, the National Association of State Directors of Adult Education, and all other state agencies to ensure continued alignment with the Illinois Unified Plan, the Illinois Strategic Plan, Perkins V, and other organizations/state agencies as the plans and programs evolve. 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 the curriculum needed to support students entering career pathway programs.
- 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 developed or will continue in the following areas: Leadership Excellence Academy (LEA) for administrators and state staff in the overall evaluation of program instruction and services provided; Evidence-Based Reading Instruction (STAR) (i.e., enhanced toolkit); Content Standard Development, Enhancement, and Implementation (i.e., Standard Proficient Trainings and Career Navigator Trainings) Curriculum and Lesson Plan Development; ELA; Civic Education; Integrated Literacy and Civics; Competency Development and Implementation; Transitions and Workplace Education; development of Instructional Leaders and Instructor Academies; Increase Technology-based professional development including exploration of hybrid adult education instructional models; Integrated Education and Training; Bridge Programs; Career Awareness; Math, Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening; host conferences, workshops, advisory committees, training and meetings that promote career pathways

education, transitions, adult literacy; develop tools and conduct relevant research that show the connection of professional development to instruction; and other activities that support the ongoing enhancement of adult education instruction.

- The ICCB will seek opportunities to promote innovation. Examples may include the development of a Pre-apprenticeship bridge program and/or a Competency-Based Education instruction. For the Pre-apprenticeship bridge program, the ICCB will develop an ICAPS program that will enable adult learners to transition from the adult education classroom to an apprenticeship. The agency is investigating the creation of a competency-based education model that uses a combination of pre-existing adult education and IET coursework. The ICCB will also assist programs with incorporating technology into instruction by supporting the development and delivery of a rigorous preparation curriculum, establish a quality assurance and approval process for web-based curriculum; 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. 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.
- The ICCB utilizes a statewide data collection system (DAISI, Data and Information System Illinois) to monitor the performance of all Title II-funded adult education and literacy providers. The data collected in DAISI is then analyzed and used to evaluate the quality and improvement of adult education and literacy activities by assessing the performance of providers through their educational functioning level increases or measurable skills gains. Each provider must complete fiscal/administrative and programmatic risk assessments, which determine whether a program should have increased requirements for reporting and monitoring, as a part of the grant application process. Additional monitoring takes place in the form of desktop monitoring and through regional support visits by ICCB Staff to program sites to determine programmatic and fiscal compliance, and to provide technical assistance. Detailed internal reports are maintained for each funded provider and reviewed quarterly to ensure quality and compliance. Information about models and proven or promising practices are disseminated to providers throughout the state through the use of electronic mailing lists and also at bi-annual Administrators' Meetings held by the ICCB for this purpose as well as to engage providers in statewide efforts. A variety of monitoring activities will be used in order to ensure programs ability to achieve outcomes as well as the use of corrective action plans for those programs who are low performing.

In addition to the DAISi system and monitoring performance of excepted he ICCB will participate in ongoing professional development as it relates to evaluation such as participating in the NRS Evaluation Learning Community and the Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort. The goal of participating in these trainings is to continue to utilize promising practices to improve data collection and evaluation strategies.

e. 2. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable

Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) will carry out the following permissible state Leadership Activities:

- The support of a statewide Professional Development. Utilizing federally allocated State Leadership Funds, Illinois adult education will maintain a Professional Development and Training Center (PDTC) to provide professional development. The ICCB will continue to work with the PDTC to identify professional development needs of the state, based upon regional assessments and local program data. While the PDTC addresses a host of professional development needs, each also has its own 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 ICCB will continue to evaluate professional development and training that will better align with WIOA and the Adult Education Strategic Plan activities. The ICCB will also explore other ways in which to enhance instructional practices in the classroom. This may include evaluation of classroom activities, student and teacher surveys, development of regional approaches to support classroom implementation of standards and other strategies, and development of advisory and ad-hoc committees to address the education, employment and literacy skills.
- 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 to 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 English Language Acquisition (ELA) levels of instruction through participation in the Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) English as a Second Language (ESL) Pro Project and Ed Tech IDEAL Consortium for Distance Education.
- Develop content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways. The ICCB will explore models that link or connect student interests to instruction, including pre-apprenticeship models. 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 designed to illustrate a student's movement from basic instruction through career pathway programs and portfolio development. The ICCB will continue to add additional Integrated Education and Training (IET), Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IEL/CE), Workforce Preparation, 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.

- Development of Toolkits to assist programs in the development and implementation of Programs and Services. This may include support services, work-based learning, pre/apprenticeship, sector/industry-recognized credentials, IEL/CE models, Adult Education, IET, and English language services.
- The development and implementation of a system to assist in the transition from adult education to post-secondary education, including linkages with post-secondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education. Development of a more structured approach for navigators throughout the state. The ICCB will work through its' Area Planning Council process and the Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIB) to develop a streamlined approach to link students to post-secondary 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 continues to partner with businesses, state agencies, Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, post-secondary education throughout the state in the development of a Health Care, Technology, Manufacturing, Transportation, Distribution and Logistic (TDL), as well as other high demand curricula. The ICCB will research workplace programs that will connect students to employment and will work closely with the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) to identify statewide curricula in other career pathway areas to be developed.
- Collaborative and service integration activities that will build upon statewide efforts to align with State Plans. These may include the Unified Plan, Workforce Education, Perkins V State Plan, Workforce Board Strategic Plan, the Governor's Executive Order #3 and Economic Development Plan, P-20 efforts, and the state's completion agenda.
- 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 twelve 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.
- 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 Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE) and ELA; and will continue to develop a crosswalk of student knowledge and skills to other post-secondary education areas and occupational programs. The ICCB completed the alignment of ELA standards to CCRS in 2017 but will continue to make modifications as needed. The ICCB has developed an Essential Skills Framework and will work to ensure programs have incorporated the framework into instructional practices. 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 the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services in the identification of new tools and strategies that can be integrated.

Outreach to Instructors, students and employers. This may include surveys as well as partnering with other partner agencies to understand the needs of 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.

The ICCB may also fund other permissible activities such as:

- Developing and disseminating curricula, including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults;
- The provision of assistance to eligible providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve the objectives of WIOA and Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and in measuring the progress of those programs in achieving such objectives, including meeting the state adjusted levels of performance; or
- The development and implementation of a system to assist in the transition from adult education to post-secondary education, including linkages with post-secondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education.

- Pilot projects and other related projects that show integration and alignment of services by partnering with core and required partners under WIOA.
- The development of activities for the strategies listed under the Unified State Plan.
- The development of activities to embed technology skills and the use of a variety of distance education tools into instruction.
- Using technology to disseminate best practices.
- The integration of English Language Acquisition instruction with the Civics Education Competencies.
- The development of strategic planning activities that align adult education to workforce and post-secondary education, training activities and WIOA related activities

f. Assessing Quality

Describe 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) of WIOA.

The Illinois Community College Board (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 quarterly report submissions, program visits, the Desktop Monitoring Tool, fiscal and compliance monitoring, and through the Data and Information System – Illinois (DAIS–I). In addition, programs failing to meet set targets for the National Reporting System are subject to being placed on a probation or watch list which is designed to identify and assist struggling programs to improve. Programs placed on probation must submit a corrective action plan. Furthermore, a State Policy and Procedure manual is widely distributed and is posted on the ICCB website,

https://www.iccb.org/iccb/wp-content/pdfs/adulted/provider_manual/FY20_Provider_Manual.pdf

ICCB funded Adult Education and 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.

Development of survey to gather feedback from students, teachers, employers, and partner agencies to enhance the delivery of adult education activities under Title II.

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 ICCB 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 Adult Education and Financial Literacy (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.
 - National Reporting System (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 High School Equivalency (HSE) or Secondary Credential report includes all learners who take all HSE tests and exit during the Fiscal Year and all learners who are enrolled in adult high school (HSCR classes) at the high Adult Secondary Education (ASE) High Level and exit during the Fiscal Year.
- Cohort: Follow-up Measure 4–Entered Post-secondary report includes students from the group that was counted as a success for the Earned HSE/High School 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 Fiscal Year.
- IEL/Civics Report provides information about the number of students supported with IEL/Civics dollars and the competencies completed by these students.
- High School Equivalency data match report by student, or program record includes all data matched HSE 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 separate 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.

The ICCB also assesses the quality of the professional development programs that are designed to improve instruction in all areas. The assessment process is done through evaluations of training sessions and research conducted to determine outcomes and levels of learning. The ICCB is in the process of developing a professional development portal that will, among other functions, track instructor professional development that can be linked to classroom outcomes as an additional method of evaluating the effectiveness of the professional development.

Professional development is still in development for instructional staff, including both volunteer and paid personnel. Some professional development training has been developed for special learning needs and the specific needs of adult learners. This area is undergoing further development, with plans to survey students regarding the specific needs that are unique to the adult education population.

The ICCB regularly meets with the professional development and training center to assess, develop and revise the training and development offerings in order to ensure that the most effective and promising practices and methods are being utilized and highlighted. For example, plans are in place to fully examine and assess the existing professional development that is available for career pathways and transitions in efforts to determine what to keep, what needs to be developed and added and what needs to be retired. The expansion of integrated education and training and the growing focus on career pathway education and training necessitate the most up-to-date, relevant, and effective training resources and materials. The reports noted above will also be used to determine professional development needs as well as to assess outcomes as it relates to professional development. For example, in recent years, research was conducted on the effectiveness of evidence-based reading instruction. This research helped to determine the local training needs and how things are to be structured.

Program-Specific Requirements for Wagner-Peyser Program (Employment Services)

a. 1. Describe how the State will staff the provision of labor exchange services under the Wagner-Peyser Act, such as through State employees, including but not limited to state merit staff employees, staff of a subrecipient, or some combination thereof.

In response to the Wagner-Peyser Act Staffing Flexibility Final Rule provisions governing the Wagner-Peyser Act at 20 CFR 651, 652, 653, and 658, effective February 5, 2020: The State of Illinois will continue to staff the provision of labor exchange services under the Wagner-Peyser Act through state employees, including but not limited to, state merit-staff employees.

a. 2. Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers

To ensure Wagner Peyser Employment Service staff perform in the most efficient and effective manner to deliver high-quality services to both job seekers and employers, continuous participation in professional staff development courses is one of the most significant objectives outlined for staff. Employment Service staff participate in both state and federal sponsored professional development opportunities offered by Employment and Training Administration Workforce GPS which involves webinars, training resources and promising practices for workforce professionals, educators and business leaders. Diversity Partners through Cornell University provides an online toolbox for frontline staff, technical assistance, training, resources and tools for agency leaders. Staff also take advantage of training and coaching opportunities offered by AARP through our Title 1 partners, in addition to weekly Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) webinars and trainings. Professional development opportunities are also made available through the Department of Human Services (DHS). Internal educational opportunities will continue to be provided to Employment Service staff as it relates to workshop presentations, public speaking, resume writing and critiquing, interviewing skills, networking, career exploration, the use of related assessment instruments, and the use of social media for job seeking and outreach purposes. Future internal certification based on industry standards and Agency policies and procedures is currently under discussion and development.

a. 3. Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of UI eligibility issues and referral to UI staff for adjudication

To ensure our customers receive quality employment services, access to education, training, supportive services, job placement and to assist the business community with hiring and retaining skilled workers, collaboration among the core and required partners is imperative. Service integration and professional staff development are essential to the success of this workforce initiative. Developing a comprehensive and effective training curriculum is the key component to service integration within the American Job Centers. The development and delivery of the training curriculum will be a collaborative effort by representatives from each core and required program and will include a general overview of each related to services offered

in the comprehensive one-stop centers or at other locations. 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 are currently trained to identify and resolve UI eligibility issues or when required refer those issues to UI staff for investigation. Training the Employment Services staff on identifying UI issues, resolving and the referral process has been provided in person and the training modules are maintained and accessible on the agency's internal website. Refresher training sessions will be provided to staff performing employment services, and updates to the UI program will be shared as they occur. Similar methods of training will be provided for other required partners under WIOA, through live and pre-recorded webinars, job aids, and in-person training sessions as needed.

b. Explain how the State will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through one-stop centers, as required by WIOA as a career service

Meaningful assistance to individuals requesting guidance in filing a claim for unemployment insurance benefits through the comprehensive one-stop center will be provided by the Employment Service staff located in the American Job Centers. These staff members have existing knowledge of the UI program and claim-filing process. Direct linkage which provides on-demand, real-time access to additional agency staff is also available in American Job Centers that lack full-time UI staff. The direct linkage line is available to assist with UI specific inquiries. Information about the UI program will be provided to customers that visit the job center individually and during group informational workshops 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. Describe the State's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals

Strategies utilized to provide reemployment assistance to both UI claimants and all other unemployed individuals include encouraging non- UI customers to register with the employment service system and requiring UI claimants to register with the employment service labor exchange system as an eligibility requirement to receive for benefits. Immediately after filing a claim for benefits and registering with the employment service system, outreach is conducted to assess the individual's reemployment needs and offer the appropriate assistance necessary to meet his/her reemployment needs. Making available and easily accessible online training, educational, labor market and career information resources for individuals who are job-ready and seeking to explore new career options is the strategy for providing reemployment assistance. The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program is a UI program funded by the U.S. Dept. of Labor to assist unemployment insurance claimants who have been identified as those individuals with the highest propensity for exhausting UI benefits, return to work faster. Those identified as participants in the program are required to report in-person, receive an orientation to the American Job Center, participate in the development of an individual employment plan and participate in employment services that will result in the claimant securing and maintaining suitable employment. Following up on the claimant's progress on items outlined in the individual employment plan is also beneficial in successfully securing employment. Collaborating with

core, required and local partner agencies, targeting special populations within underserved communities, conducting outreach campaigns to provide information and referrals to existing employment opportunities, and training and educational services are also a strategy used to reemploy individuals who are not receiving unemployment benefits. Strategically increasing and improving messaging/communications related to employment service opportunities and all services available in the American Job Centers will also assist in our efforts to expand our delivery of reemployment services. Establishing and improving our relationship with the employer community will provide the agencies with a better understanding of the employers' recruiting needs. This will result in making proper referrals to available job openings, and training.

d. 1. Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;

Coordination between Wagner-Peyser and Unemployment Insurance programs begins with the requirement that all UI claimants register with the employment service system to fulfill the UI eligibility requirement. Regardless of the claim filing method via online, by phone or in person, the claimant is immediately transitioned to Wagner Peyser Employment Service by being informed of the requirement to register with employment services before benefits are issued. As a result of the UI claimants being registered in the employment services system, the employment services staff will be able to target this population, conduct outreach and provide labor exchange services by requesting the claimant to report in-person to an American Job center or affiliate location to receive reemployment assessments for job placement, training, educational or supportive services. Outreach to UI claimants is conducted via phone call by the employment service staff, messaging through the phone notification systems, e-mail blasts notifications and/or individual and mass mailings.

d. 2. Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;

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 is 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.

d. 3. Administration of the work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and

Section 500 C 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 is able to work and is available for work; provided that during the period in question he was actively seeking work and he has certified such. UI claimants who are determined to be unable, unavailable, and not actively seeking work will not be eligible to receive benefits. UI claimants that are required to register and receive employment services and the population of UI claimants identified through the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program will be required to comply with the above section of the UI Act. Failure to participate in reemployment activities as required will be documented in the employment service system and trigger the posting and scheduling of an adjudication issue in the UI benefits system. If an eligibility issue arises while providing employment services, the case will either be investigated and determined by the employment service staff or be referred to the UI staff for immediate resolution.

d. 4. Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.

Individuals that may require additional assistance with his/her reemployment efforts may be identified through various means including participation in the UI Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program; agency correspondence; in-person contact at an American Job Center location; contact by phone; e-mail; or through an automated self-assessment process. It is through these methods that requests are made to targeted individuals to participate in an assessment and development of an Individual Reemployment Plan, with assistance from the Wagner-Peyser staff. The development of an Individual Reemployment Plan will assist in identifying the existence of any barriers to obtaining and maintaining meaningful employment. The barriers identified in the plan will be the basis in which the individual is referred to additional services that will assist with reemployment efforts including, but not limited to, workshops that focus on specific employment needs, job training, adult education or literacy programs, trade assistance, supportive services, veteran outreach services, youth services, career pathways or vocational rehabilitation services. Wagner Peyser Employment Service staff continue to collaborate with core and required partner staff to ensure proper referrals are made.

e. 1. Assessment of Need. Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

Illinois Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) portion of the State Plan details the plans for providing services to the agricultural community, both for agricultural employers and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs), for the period of July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2023 as described in Wagner-Peyser (W-P) regulations at 20 CFR 653.107, WIOA Sections 102 and 103, and the Unified Planning Guidance. In PY 20, IDES will provide Wagner-Peyser services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers and employers of migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFW). Illinois will ensure that the full range of services provided to MSFWs are qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate to the services provided to non-MSFWs. The agency will ensure that MSFWs are offered employment services, benefits and protections, including information on jobs, registration assistance, referrals to a qualified job, vocational counseling,

testing and job training referral services. To ensure statewide compliance, the agency will make every effort to meet the Migrant Indicators of Compliance as well as the Minimum Service Level Indicators.

There has been a constant movement of MSFWs throughout the state in order to find work. This constant movement makes it difficult for outreach staff to provide consistent services to MSFWs that could lead them to permanent full-time employment or training opportunities.

In addition to their constant movement, other obstacles such as lack of transportation, limited English-speaking abilities and education, job training, childcare, and access to permanent low-cost housing if they choose to stay in Illinois, also negatively impact their employment and training opportunities.

Per IMC field staff it is projected that the number of MSFWs in 2020 will remain the same as in 2019. However as noted in the previous AOP the number of MSFWs is expected to decline in the future for several reasons, such as, Illinois agricultural employers using H-2A workers and the reluctance to migrate for fear of restrictive government policies and negative community reactions to immigrants.

e. 2. An assessment of the agricultural activity in the State means: 1) Identifying the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity; 2) Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and 3) Identifying any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State

Illinois' major labor-intensive agricultural activities for the previous year consisted of soybeans, corn, and swine. The state's climate and varied soil types enable farmers to grow and raise many other agricultural commodities, including cattle, wheat, oats, sorghum, hay, sheep, poultry, fruits and vegetables. Illinois also produced several specialty crops, such as buckwheat, horseradish, ostriches, fish and Christmas trees.

As of August 2018, the growth of hemp was legalized in Illinois and in December 2018, Congress passed a farm bill legalizing industrial hemp production in the state. Illinois started accepting applications for hemp growers and processors in May 2019 and applicants were given the options to grow different types of hemp, some of which can be used for fiber in textiles, a variety that generates grains for food, or a CBD-specific strain of hemp. Due to the early stages of the hemp industry in Illinois, statistical information and agricultural activity is not yet available.

The primary industries for employment needs were corn and soybean companies. Other industries with smaller workforces remain in fruit and vegetable farms producing crops such as pumpkins and horseradish.

Illinois' geographic area of prime activity sees cold, fairly dry winters and warm, humid summers with ample rainfall that allows the land to support many kinds of crops and livestock. About 89 percent of the state's cropland is considered prime farmland, ranking the state third nationally in total prime farmland acreage. This environment has made the central three-fourths of the state especially well-suited for growing corn and soybeans, while hilly areas in the northwest and south provide excellent pasture for swine and other livestock.

An overview of Illinois' major crop activity, based on The University of Illinois Extension Service - Summary of Illinois Specialty Growers Association:

- 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)
- Thornless 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)

While much of the agriculture workforce resides in the United States, the demand for labor exceeds supply, and immigrants are important contributors to the agricultural workforce. Food and agriculture jobs in Illinois offer immigrants significant economic opportunities, like the H-2A temporary agricultural program. However, the H-2A program has made it difficult for employers to find, retain, and maintain an adequate, legal and cost-competitive labor supply due to the costs associated with the program. Today, three-quarters of the hired laborers who do most of the work on U.S. farms were born abroad according to a paper published by the [Migration Policy Institute](#), and nearly half do not have legal authorization to work in the U.S., significantly hindering the ability for IDES and partner agencies to provide the necessary services and resources these MSFWs need. The dependence on H-2A visas continues to grow, as traditional farm labor pools shrink. Migrant workers who used to pass through the Midwest at harvest time have settled down to give their families more stability, and the number of migrant farmworkers from Mexico who used to flow across the border in search of work has been dwindling since the recession. Counties with histories of significant migration gain prior to the recession experienced smaller net gains, or lost migrants during the recession. Meanwhile, immigrant farmworkers already in the country are aging, and their children are seeking different lines of work, just as U.S. farm families have seen their own children do for decades. According to data from the 2017 Census of Agriculture, hired farmworkers make up less than 1 percent of all U.S. wage and salary workers, but they continue to play an essential role in U.S. agriculture. Wages and salaries

plus contract labor costs represented 12 percent of production expenses for all farms, but as much as 43 percent on greenhouse and nursery operations, and 39 percent for fruits and tree nuts.

In PY18, the number of Illinois-based employers certified for 2791 H-2A visas were up nearly 54 percent from 2017. Most of the Illinois visas went to labor-intensive fruit and vegetable farms since corn and soybean farms rely more on automation. While swine production itself does not bring in a significant number of workers, the work itself is very labor-intensive, making it difficult to find employees.

In PY19, MSFW outreach staff visited small, medium, and large farming operations, including seasonal and year-round workforces. The goal was to reach as many of the migrant and seasonal farmworkers and H-2A temporary agricultural workers in the state as possible. So far, IDES MSFW staff has performed outreach to a total of 513 MSFWs and 1,649 H-2A temporary agricultural workers in PY19. According to the U.S. Department of Labor's FLC Listing, there were 22 FLC's in Illinois known to have recruited and employed farm labor.

e. 3. An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration

Illinois Migrant Council (NFJP Grantee) provided the following MSFW demographic information:

Generally, the age distribution is projected to be: 15% under 21, 59% including ages 22–44, 20% including ages 45–54, and 6% over 55. Male is 71% and female 29%. More than 75% have not finished high school. The primary language for many is Spanish; the majority has Hispanic/Latino roots. In previous years, migrant farmworkers were primarily from Texas, Mexico, Florida, and California. Recently, outreach staff has encountered individuals from other countries in Central and South America and some from West African countries with various languages and dialects. During the “high season,” the approximate statewide percentage, by regional area, is approximately 60% Migrant and 40% Seasonal. During the “low season,” the approximate statewide percentage, by regional area, is approximately 20% Migrant and 80% Seasonal.

e. 4. Outreach Activities

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

The Illinois Department of Employment Security currently employs (3) three outreach workers to service the Northern, Central, and Southern Illinois regions. At this point, we have no full-time designated MSFW staff in the Northwest region out of the Peoria, IL office and the position for the State Monitor Advocate is currently being covered by an interim State Monitor Advocate. Both positions remain open. The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker program expects to employ a total of 4 outreach workers across the state and 1 State Monitor Advocate to oversee the program out of Springfield, IL.

There is no expected reduction in staff positions or outreach activities for the 2020 Program Year.

For the 2019 MSFW Program Year, as of September 30, 2019, IDES Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker staff had 513 outreach contacts with MSFWs and 1649 outreach contacts with H-2A workers. Out of the 513 outreach contacts with MSFWs, 368 MSFWs agreed to register with IDES to receive additional services. 6 workers were referred to H-2A job orders, 368 workers received staff-assisted services, 337 workers were referred to supportive services, and 199 workers received career guidance assistance. IDES expects to have approximately 150 agricultural job orders posted in IllinoisJobLink in connection with an H-2A applications. Approximately 120 interstate clearance orders are expected to be received from neighboring and designated supply states seeking agricultural labor and approximately 45 interstate clearance orders to be approved for interstate clearance in order to fulfill Illinois' agricultural labor demand. Any positions under an H-2A contract not filled by U.S. workers will be allowed to be filled by foreign agricultural workers entering the state under the H-2A program. For PY20, IDES MSFW staff expects approximately 1000 domestic migrant and seasonal farmworker contacts, due to the increased cooperation with MSFW organizations, additional outreach staff, and the appointment of a State Monitor Advocate.

e. 4. A. Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices

MSFW outreach staff, with guidance from the State Monitor Advocate (SMA), conduct vigorous outreach throughout Illinois and provide information on services and resources available at one-stop centers to MSFWs. The SMA and/or outreach staff provide written and oral presentations to MSFWs, in both English and Spanish, at worksites, housing locations, and other common gathering areas. The SMA and outreach staff continue to reach out to state agencies and community-based organizations to develop working relationships in order to locate farmworkers that live in remote and often isolated areas.

The following information is presented verbally during outreach and provided in a packet to all MSFWs in English and the language in which the MSFWs are fluent in:

- Illinois Job Link Registration Form
- Statewide Complaint System Information
- IDES Services
- IDES MSFW Staff Contact List
- One-Stop Career Center Services and locations

- Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act
- Federal and State Labor Laws
- U.S. Department of Labor Contact Information
- Farmworker Fact Sheet
- Community Resource Guide
- Locations of Nearby State Agencies and Services/Resources Available

e. 4. B. Providing technical assistance to outreach staff. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System (“Complaint System” described at 20 CFR 658 Subpart E), information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

The SMA and outreach staff receive annual trainings and attend conferences presented by federal and state agencies as well as agricultural organizations such as: Monitor Advocate National Training Conference presented by the U.S. Department of Labor – Employment and Training; Annual Pre-Season Meetings presented by the Regional Monitor Advocate; Midwest Association of Farmworkers Organization Conference presented by various federal enforcement agencies, legal firms, and MSFW community support organizations. Topics include but are not limited to: Monitoring of the State Workforce Agency and Significant Local Offices; The Agricultural Recruitment System; Outreach; The Statewide Complaint System; MSFW Organizations; and Federal and State Enforcement Agencies. Additional trainings/conferences are approved as needed.

e. 4. C. Increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues

Initial training for outreach staff consists of:

- The background and history of the MSFW program and the Judge Richey Court Order
- Overview of core programs, services, and resources available in office/region
- UI program and general identification of UI eligibility issues
- Proper informative presentation of services to MSFWs
- Service delivery while conducting outreach
- Observation and documentation of complaints and violations
- Record keeping of outreach activities and complaints
- Federal and State Labor Laws
- The Employment Services Complaint System and enforcement agencies
- Federal code of regulations governing the MSFW and H-2A programs
- The Agricultural Recruitment System
- Housing inspections and OSHA standards
- Field checks and field visits

The State Monitor Advocate performs an annual review of all of the above training with each staff member.

e. 4. D. Providing State merit staff outreach workers professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers

The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) ensures that high-quality services are being provided to both job seekers and employers by providing technical support, guidance, and training to outreach staff. In addition to the federally mandated monitoring of local offices, the SMA provides training to managers, complaint coordinators, and office staff. They are trained on the Statewide Complaint System, Service Delivery, the Agricultural Recruitment System, and state and federal regulations pertaining to the MSFW Program.

e. 4. E. Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups

The Illinois Department of Employment Security will coordinate with WIOA Title I D Section 167 NFJP Grantee, Illinois Migrant Council, to identify MSFW needs and to facilitate or provide services and information on available resources. This will be facilitated by a Memorandum of Understanding. IDES will seek out engagement with other MFSW organizations, such as Community Health Partnership of Illinois, Legal Aid Chicago, and Illinois Department of Human Services for the purpose of identifying and assisting MSFWs and promoting the Statewide Complaint System. IDES hopes to establish more MOUs with organizations whose focus is MSFWs.

e. 5. A. Providing the Full Range of Employment and Training Services to the Agricultural Community, Both Farmworkers and Agricultural Employers, Through the One-stop Delivery System. This Includes:

- **i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers**
- **ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services**

Services Provided to MSFWs through the American Job Center Network:

IDES will ensure that MSFWs are offered services that are qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate to the services provided to non-MSFWs at all One-Stop Career Centers. To maintain compliance with federal regulations, the State Monitor Advocate conducts on-site monitoring reviews to all local offices where significant MSFW activity is expected. During these monitoring visits, the SMA determines whether One-Stop Career Centers are operating in the best interests of MSFWs and ensures that staff can properly identify and service MSFWs.

Primary Services Available at One-Stop Career Centers:

- Assisting job seekers in completing full, quality registrations and resumes in IllinoisJobLink.com
- Technical assistance through IDES staff, including trainings, conferences, comprehensive Q&A workshops, supportive services and career guidance services as well as specific employment opportunities.
- Collaborating with other state agency partners to access the services each one of them provides
- Providing a basic summary of Farmworkers Rights.
- Providing Spanish and English-speaking personnel to assist in awareness across core programs including Unemployment Insurance (UI) and identification of UI eligibility issues as well as assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation.
- Providing employer outreach workers and local office job seeker staff with professional development training to ensure they can provide high-quality services to both employers and job seekers.
- Providing outreach efforts with NFJP grantees (IMC) as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.
- Job Development
- Referrals to Partner (State or Federal) Agencies; an example would be the IL Department of Human Services for SNAP Benefits
- Labor Market Information
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Tax Credit Program information and certification of eligible applicants.
- Bi-lingual Spanish Speaking staff and Limited English Proficiency Service
- Information on the Employment Service Complaint System and Assistance in filing a Complaint
- Re Employment Service Program (RESP, ex-offenders services)
- Job Fairs
- Translation Services

Services Provided to Agricultural Employers through the American Job Center Network:

Illinois' internet-based labor exchange system, IllinoisJobLink, serves as the state's Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) and provides needed services to workers located in the U.S. and to agricultural and food processing employers. IllinoisJobLink serves employers by locating, screening, and referring qualified workers from other areas when qualified workers are not available. Through this system, states with an adequate supply of agricultural workers can be referred to employment opportunities in Illinois where agricultural labor is in demand. Similarly, other states can request permission to post-agricultural job opportunities on IllinoisJobLink to bring workers into their state. The State Monitor Advocate and outreach workers promote the ARS whenever they conduct outreach or are in communication with agricultural employers.

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
- WOTC Tax Credit Program information and certification of applicants
- Informational Meetings on Unemployment Insurance, Wage/Hour, Migrant Law, Worker's Compensation, OSHA and Migrant Camp licensing, etc.
- Labor Market Information
- Referrals of qualified workers to agricultural job openings in Illinois and other states
- Job Fairs
- Local offices offer a Conference room for recruitment purposes
- Field Checks and Visits
- Participate in New Employee Orientation meetings

e. 5. B. Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups

The State Monitor Advocate and MSFW Outreach Staff promote the Statewide Complaint System to farmworkers and farmworker advocacy groups during outreach, employer orientations, conferences, training sessions, meetings, and whenever it is needed or requested. An overview of the Statewide Complaint System is provided as a presentation and as part of an informational packet to farmworkers and farmworker advocacy groups.

e. 5. C. Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System for U.S. Workers (ARS) to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

A goal for the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) and the Illinois Migrant Council (IMC) is to strengthen employer relationships by informing agricultural employers of the services available to them. Employers will be advised on staff-assisted services such as on-site hiring and recruiting events that could include local training providers and workforce partners. The SMA and outreach staff will encourage the use of the Agricultural Recruitment System (IllinoisJobLink) by promoting it at outreach events, employer orientations, employer round table meetings, agricultural associations, conferences, and with print advertisements.

e. 6. A. Collaboration

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

The Illinois Department of Employment Security will coordinate with WIOA Title I D Section 167 NFJP Grantee, Illinois Migrant Council, to identify MSFW needs and to facilitate or provide services and information on available resources. This will be facilitated by a Memorandum of Understanding. IDES plans to engage with other MFSW organizations, such as Community

Health Partnership of Illinois, Legal Aid Chicago, and Illinois Department of Human Services, for the purpose of identifying and assisting MSFWs and promoting the Statewide Complaint System.

e. 6. B. Review and Public Comment

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.

The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

Comments and Suggestions in **BOLD**:

From IMC Cynthia Thomas Grant – Director of Workforce Development:

- **Introduction Paragraph – Replace WIA with WIOA reference (Replace WIA with WIOA throughout where needed).**
 - IDES concurs.
- **IMC suggests mentioning Hemp Production in Illinois.**
 - IDES concurs BUT statistical information and agricultural activity is not yet available. Paragraph acknowledging that hemp production is now present in Illinois was inserted on Page 1
- **Remove “like the H-2A temporary agricultural program” from the sentence: Food and agriculture jobs in Illinois offer immigrants significant economic opportunities, like the H-2A temporary agricultural program. [because] [H-2A workers are non-immigrant workers so would not be an example here.]**
 - IDES disagrees. The H-2A program does offer employment opportunities to immigrants who wish to remain in Illinois and work in a job tied to the H-2A program. Non-immigrant workers do compose the majority of the workers in the H-2A program, but U.S. Citizens and residents are given priority over the job openings within the H-2A program if they wish to apply.

- **Explanation for “and nearly half don’t have legal authorization to work in the U.S.” in the sentence: Today, three-quarters of the hired laborers who do most of the work on U.S. farms were born abroad, according to a paper published by the Migration Policy Institute, and nearly half don't have legal authorization to work in the U.S. [Question: purpose to include this statement here?]**
 - IDES concurs and adds: ”, significantly hindering the ability for IDES and partner agencies to provide the necessary services and resources these MSFWs need. “
- **Remove “Mexicans” and Replace with “migrant farmworkers from Mexico” from the sentence : Migrant workers who used to pass through the Midwest at harvest time have settled down to give their families more stability, and the number of Mexicans who used to flow across the border in search of work has been dwindling since the recession**
 - IDES concurs.
- **Remove “MSFW” and Replace with “migrant farmworkers” from sentence: However, based on the shift to the H-2A program in the recent years, IDES anticipates Illinois will experience a steady decline in the number of MSFWs entering the state in the upcoming years. [because] [by DOL’s definition for NFJP, seasonals reside in Illinois and do not travel overnight to do farmwork]**
 - IDES concurs and replaces MSFWs with migrant farmworkers throughout the AOP when referring strictly to DOL’s definition of migrant workers.
- **Removal/Replacement of Grammatical Errors throughout**
 - IDES Concur

e. 6. C. Data Assessment

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

Previous year's history (based on Program Year PY 2018 data):

- Number of agricultural job orders and openings received: 132 agricultural job orders and 2507 job openings
- Number of agricultural job orders filled: 132
- Percent filled: 100 %
- Number of interstate clearance orders received: 100
- Number of interstate clearance orders initiated: 35

IDES received a total of 132 job orders in connection with H-2A applications with 2,507 openings available. U.S. workers, specifically MSFWs, were informed of the job opportunities but only 5 U.S. workers applied and ultimately only 1 U.S. worker accepted a position. 100

Interstate clearance orders were received from neighboring and designated supply states seeking agricultural labor and 35 clearance orders were approved for interstate clearance. All available positions were filled with H-2A workers when U.S. workers were not enough to meet the labor demand.

In the 2018 Program Year, from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, IDES Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker staff conducted 147 outreach contacts with MSFWs and 1,169 outreach contacts with H-2A workers. Out of the 147 outreach contacts with MSFWs, 140 agreed to register with IDES to receive additional services. 5 workers were referred to H-2A job orders, 117 workers received staff-assisted services, 84 workers were referred to supportive services, and 4 workers received career guidance assistance.

Plan for upcoming year (based on estimated data):

- Number of agricultural job orders and openings expected to be received: 145 agricultural job orders and 2700 job openings
- Number of agricultural job orders projected to be filled: 145
- Percent filled: 100%
- Estimated number of interstate clearance orders the state will receive: 120
- Estimated number of interstate clearance orders the state will initiate: 45

IDES expects to have approximately 145 agricultural job orders posted in IllinoisJobLink in connection with an H-2A applications approximately 2,700 positions will be available. Approximately 120 interstate clearance orders are expected to be received from neighboring and designated supply states seeking agricultural labor and approximately 45 interstate clearance orders to be approved for interstate clearance in order to fulfill Illinois' agricultural labor demand.

For the 2019 Program Year, as of September 30, 2019, IDES Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker staff have had 513 outreach contacts with MSFWs and 1,649 outreach contacts with H-2A workers. Out of the 513 outreach contacts with MSFWs, 368 MSFWs agreed to register with IDES to receive additional services. 6 workers were referred to H-2A job orders, 368 workers received staff-assisted services, 337 workers were referred to supportive services, and 199 workers received career guidance assistance. IDES projects an additional 500 MSFW contacts and approximately 300 of those MSFWs to register and receive services by the end of the 2019 Program Year.

e. 6. D. Assessment of Progress

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

The service goals and the extent of outreach efforts based on the previous AOP were not achieved as projected. The retirement of the previous State Monitor Advocate in 2015 left the position open but, due to the unique nature of the position, qualified candidates have not

accepted the position. Additionally, several staffing changes led to insufficient time frames to adequately train staff for outreach efforts and the ability to meet service goals.

The Illinois Department of Employment Security is currently in the process of posting 2 additional outreach worker positions in the northern and northwestern regions of Illinois and posting a permanent State Monitor Advocate position. It is expected that, since staffing has limited the goals of the MSFW Program, the hiring of a permanent State Monitor Advocate and outreach workers will give Illinois the ability to achieve the goals set in this AOP over the course of the next four years.

e. 6. E. State Monitor Advocate

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

The interim State Monitor Advocate, Edgar Revuelta, was involved in the research and composition of the Agricultural Outreach Plan. He has been afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the PY 2020-23 Agricultural Outreach Plan and he approves the plan.

Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined or General)

a. 1. Input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;

SRC Comment: The SRC continues to recommend regular Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) are conducted every three years in accordance with the guidelines established by the Rehabilitation Services Administration and in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The SRC suggests using the RSA VR Needs Assessment guide when developing the assessment. The SRC would like DRS to report to the SRC on the development, methods of gathering data, findings, goals and action plans at the beginning of each quarter.

DRS Response: DRS agrees that needs assessment activities are highly important to the success of the VR program. DRS intends to issue a request for proposal to external survey research entities to conduct a more substantial process than would be possible for DRS to conduct internally. It is expected that this survey would take place in the fall of 2020.

SRC Comment: The SRC continues to recommend regular satisfaction surveys to DRS customers, transition students, schools, rehabilitation agencies, provider agencies and employees to determine areas for service improvement. The SRC suggests implementing an ongoing survey process that would allow DRS to regularly gather information that can be used to improve decision making and results. The SRC still suggests using multiple survey completion options for accessibility and recommends supplementing online survey administration with other information gathering techniques, such as in-person focus groups or telephone interviews. Customer and transition student surveys should seek feedback on customer satisfaction, quality of services, customer treatment, service accessibility and timely follow-up. Provider surveys should seek to determine areas needing improvement such as partnering, agency interactions, and communication. Staff surveys should seek to determine level of satisfaction with their job, unmet needs and help to determine areas of improvement. Schools and rehab agency surveys should seek to determine the barriers they are encountering when trying to get students and consumers into community vocational experiences.

a. If DRS lacks the manpower to carry out the administration of these surveys, the SRC recommends that DRS contract with an outside company to conduct and analyze the surveys. This way various survey methods can be used which will provide an opportunity to find out which method works best for each group surveyed.

b. DRS should consider offering bi-annual consumer input sessions where they invite consumers from various communities across the state. All staff members should be encouraged to attend. This would help to capture the voice of the consumer.

c. The survey should be sent to current customers of DRS (i.e. customers that are receiving services) as well as lapsed or customers found ineligible for services.

DRS Response: DRS agrees that it is important to have solid information on customer satisfaction. DRS is open to exploring a number of options, including the use of external survey organizations, to improve the scope and quality of customer satisfaction data. DRS will work with the SRC to develop these options in the coming year.

SRC Comment: SRC members recommend increasing the scope of work-based learning experiences for DRS customers and youth with disabilities, including internships, apprenticeships, transitional jobs and other non-traditional experiences that increase the skills of the individual and enhance future opportunities for competitive integrated employment.

a. DRS should collaborate with state-wide work-based learning efforts to ensure that people with disabilities are included in the planning, execution, and evaluation of the programs.

b. The SRC requests that progress updates be given at the beginning of each quarter.

DRS Response: DRS agrees that a variety of work-based learning experiences should be available to VR customers, particularly to students and youth with disabilities. DRS believes that various work experiences are available through existing programs, such as the Secondary Transitional Experience Program and the Fast Track Transition program. DRS is open to working with workforce partner agencies to add additional options for these experiences.

SRC Comment: The SRC would like to continue to have annual joint meetings with DRS for open communication. We see these as a good opportunity to collaborate and set some focus for the next year. These meetings can help ensure that the SRC is providing the most appropriate level of support to DRS leadership and their pursuit of DRS goals

DRS Response: DRS supports this recommendation.

SRC Comment: The SRC would like to increase the coordination of meeting schedules and agendas to ensure that appropriate DRS leaders are available to participate in SRC meetings.

DRS Response: DRS supports this recommendation.

SRC Comment: The SRC believes that DRS should increase the use of data in decision-making across the agency. In particular, data on short and long-term customer outcomes, customer and staff satisfaction, and program productivity should be collected, analyzed, and reported on a consistent schedule. The specific metrics and format should be developed collaboratively between DRS leadership and the SRC Executive Committee.

a. During the first quarter of the plan year, DRS leadership and the SRC Executive Committee should define critical metrics and an appropriate format and schedule for reporting.

b. In the second quarter of the year, DRS should implement the processes, tools, and responsibilities to enable consistent on-going reporting.

c. DRS should ensure continued participation in statewide data collection and sharing initiatives.

DRS Response: DRS is in agreement that data is important for decision-making in the VR program. DRS recently established a data analytics unit to centralize data functions for the program and provide a resource to program administrators. The data analytics unit will work with the SRC to create reports as identified above.

SRC Comment: The SRC supports DRS efforts to increase competitive employment outcomes to 6,500 in PY 2023 (FY2024). The SRC recommends the development of an integrated strategy and plan to achieve this objective. At a minimum, the plan should include elements of job development, counselor staffing, referral growth, and partnership development. Each element of the plan should have specific goals and metrics that build towards the PY 2023 goal.

DRS Response: DRS agrees that each of the elements mentioned above are important in achieving our goals for employment outcomes. DRS will work with the SRC to identify how these elements can contribute to growth in employment outcomes on a consistent basis.

SRC Comment: The SRC recommends that DRS adopt the career pathways approach, structure, and nomenclature for DRS programs and initiatives. The National and Illinois workforce systems are adopting this structure. Adopting the same system will simplify person-based planning – especially for DRS clients in high school and post-secondary programs, such as work-based learning. In addition, using the same approach should provide access to funding streams specifically designed for career pathway programs.

DRS Response: DRS supports this recommendation. This plan includes a goal to establish a career pathways model within the VR program over the next four years. DRS will work with our workforce partner agencies to ensure that the DRS model conforms to career pathways models utilized across the state.

SRC Comment: The SRC recommends that DRS develop and enhance partnerships in the community in order to ensure the highest quality of services in Illinois based on the results of the 2017 satisfaction survey. Examples of these partnerships would be postsecondary education institutions, community colleges, employers, CILs, and workforce development agencies.

DRS Response: DRS supports this recommendation. While DRS maintains a number of partnerships with agencies and organizations across the state, these can be expanded and strengthened going forward.

SRC Comment: The SRC recommends that DRS develop a plan to mitigate transportation barriers for customers seeking and maintaining employment to help ensure successful outcomes.

a. SRC encourages DRS to engage employers on or near transit routes or paratransit routes as a priority for outreach for hiring, but not to make that their only solution to transportation barriers.

- b. SRC suggests that DRS offer incentives to rural transportation providers to widen their scope of ridership to include rides to and from work.
- c. SRC suggests that DRS consider collaborating with other providers to offer transit training to those obtaining employment and provide financial compensation to the agencies providing such training.
- d. SRC suggests that DRS consider providing bus passes in the early stages of a new customer hire to support the transportation needs of those obtaining employment while the customer works through their personal transportation barriers.

DRS Response: DRS is in agreement that limitations on transportation present a significant barrier to employment for many persons with disabilities. The workforce development unit will identify transportation concerns in working with employers. DRS will also engage with other workforce system partners to identify transportation options in rural communities. DRS will explore options for transit training for individuals requiring such a service and will continue to provide transportation assistance consistent with DRS administrative rules.

a. 2. The designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and

Responses are incorporated in the previous section.

a. 3. The designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.

Not applicable.

b. 1. A local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;

The Division of Rehabilitation Services maintains a considerable number of third-party cooperative agreements with other units of government, primarily school districts. These 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 cooperative 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 pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities through contractual arrangements with high schools, school districts and cooperatives across the state. In the current fiscal year, DRS has contracts with 149 local education entities. Of that number 133 are third-party cooperative agreements and 16 are some other form of contract.

Collectively, these arrangements result in provision of pre-employment transition services to over 10,000 students each year. As of January 2020, a total of 10,946 students were enrolled in STEP in 643 schools. STEP services include: job exploration counseling; workplace readiness training including social skills and independent living skills; counseling on postsecondary educational opportunities; instruction in self-advocacy; and a variety of work-based learning experiences both in the school and in the community.

Schools with Third-Party STEP Contracts in State Fiscal Year 2020 (July 1 2019 to June 30 2020)

Community Unit School District 95, Lake Zurich; Sangamon Area Special Education District, Springfield; Eastern Illinois Area Special, Charleston; Decatur Public School District 61, Decatur; Quincy Public Schools, Quincy; Jacksonville School District 117, Jacksonville; Livingston County Special Serv, Pontiac; Massac County Unit School District 1, Metropolis; Granite City Com Unit Sch Dst9, Granite City; JAMP Special Education Services, Grand Chain; East Alton Wood River Comm HS, Wood River; Anna Jonesboro Community, Anna; Alton Comm Unit School District, Alton; Geneseo Community Unit School, Geneseo; Belleville Township High, Belleville; Collinsville Community Unit, Collinsville; Williamson County Special, Marion; Mid-State Special Education, Morrisonville; Triad Comm Unit School District 2, Troy; South Eastern Special Educ, Ste Marie; Perandoe Special Education District, Red Bud; O'Fallon Township High School, O'Fallon; Mt Vernon Township High School, Mt Vernon; Frankfort Community Unit, West Frankfort; Mascoutah Community Unit, Mascoutah; County of Jackson, Murphysboro; Bradley Bourbonnais Community, Bradley; Bethalto Unit No 8, Bethalto; West Central Illinois Spec Educ Coop, Macomb; Regional Office of Education, Bloomington; Ball Chatham School District 5, Chatham; Kankakee School District 111, Kankakee; LaSalle-Peru Township High, La Salle; Woodford County Special Ed Assoc, Metamora; Canton Union School, Canton; Hancock-McDonough ROE 26, Macomb; Princeton Township High School, Princeton; Dixon Unit School District 170, Dixon; Rochester Community Unit School, Rochester; Ottawa Township High School, Ottawa; Streator Township

High School, Streator; Putnam County Community Unit, Granville; Highland Community School District, Highland; Tri County Special Education, Murphysboro; Galesburg Community Unit School, Galesburg; Springfield School District 186, Springfield; Jersey County CUSD 100, Jerseyville; Tazewell Mason Counties Special Education Assn, Pekin; Vermilion Assoc Of Special Education, Danville; Northwest Special Education District, Elizabeth; Community Unit District No 203, Naperville; Ogle County Educational Coop, Byron; Wabash & Ohio Valley Se District, Norris City; School District U-46, Elgin; Elmhurst Com Unit Sch District 205, Elmhurst; Evanston Township High School, Evanston; Black Hawk Area Special Ed, East Moline; Edwardsville Community Unit, Edwardsville; DuPage High School District 88, Addison; Allendale Association, Lake Villa; Lockport Township High School, Lockport; Board Of Education City Of Peoria, Peoria; Community Unit School District 300, Algonquin; Community High School District 155, Crystal Lake; Freeport School District 145, Freeport; Lincoln-Way Com High School, New Lenox; Mid-Valley Spec Ed Joint Agreement, St Charles; Aurora West School District 129, Aurora; Special Education Association, Bartonville; Joliet Township HS District 204, Joliet; Leyden High School District No 212, Northlake; School District 234 Ridgewood High, Norridge; Fenton Community High School, Bensenville; Glenbard Township High School, Glen Ellyn; Cook County High School District, Berwyn; Niles Township District 219, Skokie; Aero Special Educ Coop, Burbank; Marengo High School District 154, Marengo; Southern Will County Coop 22, Joliet; Speed Special Ed Joint Agreement, Chicago Heights; Northwest Suburban Special, Mount Prospect; Southwest Cook Coop Spec Ed, Oak Forest; Proviso Township High School, Maywood; Oak Park & River Forest High School, Oak Park; Community High School District 99, Downers Grove; School Association For Special Educ, Naperville; Plainfield School District 202, Plainfield; Maine Township High School, Park Ridge; Community Unit School District 200, Wheaton; Valley View Public Schools, Romeoville; LaGrange Area Dept of Special Education, LaGrange; Community High School District 218, Oak Lawn; Thornton Township H S District 205, South Holland; School District 131, Aurora; Northern Suburban Spec Ed District, Highland Park; Special Ed District of Lake County, Gages Lake; Roxana Community Unit School, Roxana; The Hope School, Springfield; West Washington Community, Okawville; Cahokia Comm School District 187, Cahokia; Community Unit School, Woodstock; Johnsborg Community Unit School, Johnsborg; Hinsdale Township High School, Hinsdale; Huntley School District No 158, Algonquin; County of Kankakee 5 Manteno, Manteno; Rural Champaign County Special Education Coop, Champaign; Warren Township High School, Gurnee; Cons High School District 125, Lincolnshire; Mattoon Community School, Mattoon; McHenry Community High School District 156, McHenry; Indian Prairie School District 204, Aurora; Harvard Community Unit, Harvard; Columbia Community Unit, Columbia; Zion Benton Township High School, Zion; Community Unit School District 308, Oswego; Lake Forest Comm H S District 115, Lake Forest; Grayslake Community High School, Grayslake; Plano Area Special Education, Plano; Knox-Warren District #801, Galesburg; Consolidated High School District 120, Mundelein; Yorkville Comm Unit District 115, Yorkville; Community Unit School District, Sterling; New Athens CUSD, New Athens; Antioch Community High School District 117, Lake Villa; North Greene County, White Hall; Community Unit School 220 Barrington, Barrington; Breese Central High School, Breese; County of Christian, Taylorville; Round Lake Area Schools District, Round Lake; Winnebago County District 323, Winnebago; Exceptional Children Have Opportunities, South Holland; South Macoupin Association, Stauton; Franklin Community Unit School, Franklin.

b. 2. The designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and

DRS develops third party agreements through a contractual process that specifies the rehabilitation services to be provided in each case. No services can be provided until the contractor agrees to the terms and conditions established by DRS, including (a) DRS maintains responsibility for establishing program eligibility and development of the IPE, and (b) the contractor must provide periodic reports of expenditures of non-federal funds.

b. 3. Requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

All State plan requirements will apply. DRS third party contracts contain the provision that all services provided must be consistent with the Unified State Plan.

c. 1. Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;

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 interagency agreements in effect with several other state agencies. DRS has a long-standing agreement with the Illinois State Board of Education regarding the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities age 14 and older. This agreement was renewed in September 2019. The renewed 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 11,000 students with disabilities each year through contracts with 149 school systems. DRS provides vocational rehabilitation services to another 1,000 high school students with disabilities outside of the contractual system. In 2018 DRS created the Fast Track Transition program operated through contracts with 22 community providers to provide pre-employment transition services to potentially eligible students with disabilities. As of December 2019 DRS had served over 1,000 students through those contracts.

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 115 not-for-profit community rehabilitation programs, which serve about 3,500 VR customers each year, providing 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.

c. 2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

DRS has a longstanding partnership with the Illinois Assistive Technology Project (IATP), the state AT grant recipient. IATP provides a variety of services to Illinois citizens with disabilities, including many who are participants in the DRS VR program. Cooperative activities include

joint staff training as well as the use of IATP staff for technology consultation on specific VR cases. DRS also works with IATP staff on general issues involving the accessibility of computer systems throughout Illinois state government. IATP also provides consultation on specific items of assistive technology and their applicability for VR program purposes. DRS has also worked with IATP on innovative approaches to purchasing assistive technology equipment for benefit of VR program customers.

c. 3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;

DRS does not have formal interagency agreements with Rural Development Programs operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. DRS intends to reach out to representatives of the Department of Agriculture to initiate a discussion of developing such an agreement.

c. 4. Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and

DRS does not have specific agreements with non-education agencies serving out-of-school youth with disabilities. Out-of-school youth are served through contracts that DRS has developed with community rehabilitation program agencies, although the contracts are not targeted at that specific age group. Data for the current state fiscal year through December 2019 show that 41 percent of individuals served were under age 25, thus meeting the WIOA definition of youth with disabilities. DRS is exploring options for working with centers for independent living regarding their mandate to serve this population.

c. 5. State use contracting programs.

DRS does not presently have formal interagency agreements with state use programs operated within Illinois. The state use program in Illinois is coordinated by the Department of Central Management Services, which awards contracts to state use providers and coordinates purchases on behalf of state agencies. State law requires that state use vendors maintain a 14c certificate from the Department of Labor to pay subminimum wages to their workers. DRS is working with the Employment and Economic Opportunity for Persons with Disabilities Task Force in their efforts to reduce reliance on subminimum wages for state use positions.

d. 1. The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

The DRS interagency agreement with the State Board of Education identifies financial roles and responsibilities for transition services. This agreement was renewed in September 2019. 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 149 school districts, of which 133 involve the use of local 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. Services provided to students with disabilities through STEP or through another arrangement focus on the key elements of pre-employment transition services as defined in WIOA: job exploration counseling; work-based learning experiences, counseling on postsecondary education, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. While STEP places an emphasis on employer-paid work in the community, each of these aspects of transition services are available to students based on individual need.

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. 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 provides financial support to the Next Steps parent-training program to assist families in understanding their children's needs regarding transition services.

In 2019 the state legislature assigned responsibility for coordinating transition issues to the Employment and Economic Opportunity for Persons with Disabilities Task Force. This entity is responsible for developing policies and disseminating data on the functioning of the transition services system as a whole. DRS is represented on the task force 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 providing pre-employment transition services throughout the high school years. 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 transition services, either through STEP or through another arrangement, is incorporated in the IPE during the time the student is in school. An IPE

is developed no later than 90 days after the student has been certified as eligible for the VR program. Development of the IPE is coordinated with the development and of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and transition plan.

d. 2. A. Consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;

The agreement provides that DRS shall provide consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for pre-employment transition services and the transition of students from school to post-school activities and ensure that local DHS-DRS staff participate in IEP meetings where transition planning occurs. In addition, DHS-DRS shall establish and collaborate with local Transition Planning Committees to outreach to and identify students with disabilities in need of pre-employment transition services and individualized transition services as early as possible in the transition planning process. DRS and the local TPCs will also plan for the availability of community services for students with disabilities before and after exiting secondary education.

d. 2. B. Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;

The agreement provides that DRS and the State Board of Education will cooperatively participate in planning, training, policy development, data collection, and resource identification and dissemination to improve transition planning for students with disabilities. Also, both parties agree to provide technical assistance to local education agency personnel regarding transition planning services for students with IEPs. Transition planning will facilitate the development and completion of IEPs and transition plans in coordination with the IPE for VR services.

d. 2. C. Roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;

The agreement describes the role of the State Board of Education to ensure that local education agencies engage students with disabilities and their families in transition planning when it is a mandated part of the IEP process. In addition, ISBE will encourage school districts to annually submit summary transition goals and services to the local Transition Planning Committee (TPC). The agreement describes the role of DRS to include providing consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for pre-employment transition services and individualized transition services facilitating the transition of students from school to post-school activities and ensure that local DRS staff participate in IEP meetings where transition planning occurs. The agreement also addresses the financial responsibilities of each party.

d. 2. D. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

The agreement provides that DRS will collaborate with local Transition Planning Committees to outreach to and identify students with disabilities in need of pre-employment transition services and individualized transition services as early as possible in the transition planning process. DRS and the local TPCs will also plan for the availability of community services for students with disabilities before and after exiting secondary education.

e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

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. DRS conducts ongoing reviews of the effectiveness of service contracts with community agencies as part of a larger 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 115 not-for-profit community rehabilitation programs, which serve about 3,500 VR customers each year, providing 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. DRS also has contracts with Centers for Independent Living to provide a variety of rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services under the Fast Track Transition program described elsewhere in this plan.

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. Illinois has developed an emphasis on performance-based or outcome-based funding for human services. DRS has converted over 85 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. Since 2017 DRS has utilized a performance-based contract for supported employment in which the provider is paid to maintain employment for individuals with most significant disabilities. DRS has also developed performance-based contracts for five community agencies implementing Project Search efforts across the state.

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

Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as

applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

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. 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 PY2020 DRS expects to continue the following levels of funding for supported employment activities. Using Title VI-B funds, DRS anticipates providing supported employment services to approximately 125 individuals, with total funding of \$0.95 million, utilizing 30 provider agencies. Using Title I funds DRS anticipates providing supported employment to approximately 1,450 individuals, total funding \$3.02 million, approximately 55 provider agencies.

DRS does not have a state-funded extended services program at this time. DRS will provide extended services to youth with a most significant disability for up to four years, or until such time that the youth reaches the age of 25 and no longer meets the definition of "youth with a disability" using Title I and Title VI funds.

Beginning in PY2020 DRS expects to implement an agreement with the DHS Division of Developmental Disabilities under which individuals can receive long-term extended supports through the DD Medicaid 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. DRS also anticipates additional supported employment customers being referred from agencies providing sheltered work.

g. 1. VR Services; and

In 2019 DRS established a workforce development unit to focus on provision of services to businesses in Illinois. This unit employs 10 staff dedicated to business services, including six in the newly created title of business services consultant as well as three staff in the legacy title of employment resource specialist. Staff have participated in training activities utilizing national

and local experts, as well as through structured online training. Members of the team work in partnership with business services teams organized in each of 22 Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIA). The workforce development unit provides information to employers on key issues relating to hiring people with disabilities, including reasonable accommodations, hiring incentives and the benefits of vocational rehabilitation services. Workforce development staff also communicate with rehabilitation counselors about employment opportunities they identify through contacts with employers and business groups.

DRS has an office supervisor or other manager as member on each local workforce board, participating in regular meetings and developing an annual memorandum of understanding and cost-sharing budget. This ongoing role also provides a key opportunity for interactive communication with employers as well as other workforce business representatives. Local board participation helps build relationships within the area and enables sharing information on employment opportunities as well as career exploration and work-based learning opportunities at the local level. DRS representatives also participate 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.

DRS continues to maintain a business engagement database that was developed in 2017 as part of the Job Driven Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center project. While this has involved a small number of staff to date, the system has documented continued growth in employer contacts, ranging from providing basic information to facilitating job interviews for candidates. Since the initiation of the system DRS has documented 274 individuals hired and 129 successful employment outcomes at the targeted businesses. The database is now being used by the workforce development unit staff and it is expected that both hires and successful closures will continue to increase.

DRS staff have also been active in planning and implementing a series of statewide WIOA Summit conferences, as part of a coordination team representing core WIOA partner agencies. The purpose of the summit is to bring together workforce partners and employers present information on workforce policies, highlight innovative practices, and demonstrate cooperative efforts around the state. The most recent summit focused on the theme of service integration, the first such statewide conference in the nation according to WINTAC. Sessions include presentations on collaboration with business partners, economic development and sector partnerships, as well as maximizing local collaboration.

DRS continues to be an active participant in the National Employment team (The NET), established by the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR). The purpose of the NET is to provide a coordinated approach by state VR agencies when dealing with employers that have a national or multi-state presence. Each state VR agency has a designated point of contact for communicating with NET employers. This helps ensure consistent communication about VR services involving the employer, as well as improving communication among state VR agencies where several states are working with the same

employer. From the DRS point of view the NET has been a very positive experience for working with large employers, which typically offer full-time employment at higher than average wages.

g. 2. Transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.

As noted elsewhere in the plan, most efforts surrounding provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities are accomplished through third-party contracts with local school districts through the Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP). These contracts are performance based and include both paid and unpaid community work experiences for students. The arrangements with employers are developed by school personnel rather than by DRS directly. In the most recent state fiscal year, STEP students were involved in 2,698 full employer-paid work experiences and 1,351 other work experiences with community employers. Employers are actively involved in working with students and typically coordinate support with the STEP contractor. DRS monitors student work experiences through monthly reporting by the contractors, which include hours worked and earnings, if any. STEP contractors also work with employers to provide opportunities for job exploration.

In 2017 DRS established the Fast Track Transition program to provide pre-employment transition services to potentially eligible students with disabilities. In the first two years of the program the emphasis has been on serving 14- and 15-year-old students that have not typically been involved with STEP. In the current year 20 of 22 Fast Track contract agencies are centers for independent living. These contractors utilize local employers to provide opportunities for job exploration and workplace readiness training. As of January 2020 over 1,000 students were enrolled in Fast Track services.

h. 1. The State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;

In 2018 the Department of Human Services, including DRS, completed a written agreement that the Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS), the State Medicaid agency. This agreement ensures that DHS and HFS will work cooperatively to promote the employment of people with disabilities and operate various Medicaid waiver programs efficiently. In addition, HFS and DRS representatives serve on the Employment and Economic Opportunity for Persons with Disabilities Task Force. This entity was created by state law and executive orders to be the key entity for studying and making policy recommendations that will promote employment of persons with disabilities. In addition, the task force has been designated as the key entity for promoting the concept of Employment First in the state.

h. 2. The State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and

The State agency for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities is the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), which like DRS is part of the Department of Human Services (DHS). The primary operations of DDD involve a set of home and community-based Medicaid waiver programs. In 2019 DDD and DRS drafted an intra-agency agreement that updated policy statements and provided for improved communication between the agencies. A

key element of the agreement was an understanding on referrals dealing with supported employment services funded by each agency, as well as funding for ongoing supports once VR funded supported employment has been completed. This is the first formal statement of such a policy and should contribute to more effective use of resources by both agencies. DRS believes that the new agreement will be particularly important due to the impact of a waiting list for DDD funded Medicaid waiver services and the availability of VR-funded supported employment.

A customized employment pilot project was created by state law in 2019, giving DRS primary responsibility for organizing and implementing the project, with the involvement of various state partners including DDD. As of January 2020, an implementation team involving both agencies has been created to develop policies and recruit qualified provider agencies to participate in the pilot project. While various efforts at implementing customized employment have taken place through DRS and DDD in the last five years, no consistent program has been implemented at the state level.

h. 3. The State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

The state agency for Mental Health Services is the Division of Mental Health (DMH), also part of the Department of Human Services. In late 2018 DMH and DRS updated a written agreement to coordinate services relating to the vocational needs of individuals with a serious mental illness. The two agencies have enjoyed an effective partnership 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 IPS Employment Center (formerly 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. Research suggests that implementation of IPS principles in VR service provision can be of benefit to a wider range of individuals.

i. 1. A. i. The number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

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. DRS has 205 VR counselor positions with 170 on hand and 35 vacant positions, and 22 rehabilitation and mobility instructors, with 13 on hand and nine vacant positions. These staff are supported by 134 rehabilitation case

coordinator positions, of which DRS has 116 on hand with 18 vacant positions. Counselor vacancies are somewhat higher than normal, but DRS anticipates that it will be able to fill these positions in the near future and return to a more normal pattern of vacancies. Data for 2019 show a total of 23,682 active cases in the DRS VR program. This gives an average of 139 individuals per filled rehabilitation counselor position and 204 per filled case coordinator position. These averages are somewhat higher than historical trends but will return to a more normal level when additional positions are filled. Specialty counselor positions have a slightly higher vacancy rate, but one that still allows DRS to provide services to select populations. DRS has 26 staff positions for counselors certified to communicate in sign language with three vacancies in this category, as well as 24 Spanish speaking counselor positions with seven vacancies in that category.

i. 1. A. ii. The number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

When fully staffed the number of positions by title will be: rehabilitation counselors 205; rehabilitation case coordinators 134; rehabilitation and mobility instructors 22; field office supervisors 35; field office support 55; staff administrative support 30; business enterprise program for the blind staff 13; central office staff 91; bureau chiefs 2; and assistant bureau chiefs 5.

i. 1. A. iii. Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

DRS anticipates that its long—term replacement rate will remain roughly the same during the next two years. There have been no major changes to the state hiring or retirement systems and the pace of hiring and separations has been normal. In the last year, the state budget process has also returned to a state of normalcy. 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 205 (35 projected replacements); rehabilitation case coordinators 134 (18); rehabilitation and mobility instructors 22 (9); field office supervisors 33 (5); business enterprise program for the blind staff 13 (4); central office staff 91 (12); bureau chiefs 2 (0); assistant bureau chiefs 5 (2).

i. 1. B. i. A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

There are five nationally accredited rehabilitation counselor education programs in Illinois: Adler University, Chicago; Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago; Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago; Northern Illinois University, DeKalb; and Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

i. 1. B. ii. The number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

The most recent available data on enrollment in and graduation from the MA programs in rehabilitation counseling at the five universities is as follows: 72 students were enrolled; 40 graduated in the last year. The estimated replacement rate for DRS counselors is 35 per year, which is higher than the rate found in previous years due to the current somewhat larger number of 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.

i. 1. B. iii. The number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

The most recent data for rehabilitation counseling graduates by program is: Illinois Institute of Technology, 10; Northeastern Illinois University, 2; Northern Illinois University, 11; Southern Illinois University, 7; and Adler University 10.

i. 2. Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

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 and to understand each university's approach to student placement post-graduation. The intent is to have multiple applicants for each vacant counseling. This is generally true in urban areas, but applications are often limited in rural areas. Based on the information available from the university programs and the number of applications for posted vacancies, DRS faces an ongoing challenge filling vacancies in rehabilitation counselor positions.

DRS is pursuing a number of options to improve the staffing situation in the VR program and make services more available to customers. This includes efforts to simplify and accelerate the hiring process for VR counselors as well as implementing a Rehabilitation Counselor Aide position in areas with high demand for services. These efforts include shortening the process for contacting applicants for counselor positions as well as modifying the process for negotiating a starting salary. One alternative under consideration is to create a special process for geographic areas where it has proven difficult to attract applicants. DRS believes that the collective result of

these efforts will be fewer VR counselor vacancies. In addition, the implementation of the counselor aide position will provide a means of engaging VR customers sooner.

DRS is also in the process of modifying the position description for the Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee position. The proposal is to allow DRS to hire individuals into the trainee title before they complete all requirements for a Master's degree. This would create what is essentially a paid internship for counselor trainees. Existing policies do not allow DRS to offer paid internships to graduate students. It is uncertain how soon this change could be implemented, but DRS believes this will eliminate a significant barrier to hiring qualified rehabilitation counselors.

DRS works with the Department of Human Services personnel unit to publicize available positions in DRS, attending 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 encourages training and education for current employees. State policy also encourages the hiring of individuals with disabilities, which is utilized by DRS to the greatest extent possible. 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 contributions to the organization.

These efforts include: (a) the Upward Mobility program, which is designed to further the careers of state employees such as those 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 (ICED), 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 is a membership organization promoting state employment for individuals from minority backgrounds, which is attended by DRS staff. (d) the Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees holds an annual conference, which focuses on state employees from Hispanic/Latino backgrounds. DRS supports staff attendance at this conference each year. DRS believes that its sponsorship of attendance at these conferences and encouragement of 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. As noted above DRS is preparing to implement a new hiring policy that will create what is essentially a paid internship for graduate students.

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. 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.

i. 3. A. Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

State Degree Standard. 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.

i. 3. B. The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

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 DRS sponsored training events are mandated for attendance by supervisors, rehabilitation counselors and rehabilitation case coordinators. The staff development section (SDS) initiates new training activities and 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 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.

DRS administration periodically reviews the training objectives of the division to ensure that staff understand the VR program and the field of rehabilitation that is consistent with current policies and practices, including an understanding of the labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities. To that end, DRS has emphasized training around changes to the Rehabilitation Act brought forth by the passage of WIOA, as well as changes to the workforce system external to the VR program. DRS has cooperated with the state Title I agency to encourage staff participation in webinar presentations by other core and required partner agencies, to ensure a greater understanding of other workforce programs and how they may be of benefit to people with disabilities.

The most recent annual regional meetings featured presentations by Illinois State University and the Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery regarding program offerings and resources available to VR staff as well as job seekers with disabilities. DRS continues to explore additional training opportunities to enhance staff understanding of workforce system services. To the greatest extent possible online training methods are used to hold down costs and provide more immediate impact to DRS staff. DRS recently hired six staff for new business services consultants. The purpose of this position is to engage with businesses throughout the state and participate in the state's integrated business services framework. For many years DRS has had a small group of employment resource specialists who worked directly with VR customers and counselors to conduct job development and job placement activities. The remaining staff in these positions will be retained and their activities coordinated with those of the business services consultants. The new business service consultants will work exclusively with business customers to identify business needs and develop effective responses.

i. 4. A. A system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

A system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

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 one support staff. SDS is responsible for providing training to DRS VR staff as well as coordinating training from other sources and maintaining the training database which tracks the number of training hours for each staff person. 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 includes Job Placement and Job Development Strategies; Case Progression and Documentation; Degree and Non Degree Case Scenarios, Organization Techniques, SEP Training, Case Notes: Styles, Structures, and Time Management. Training Provided by External Training Resources include; Autism Training, Substance Abuse Disorders and Recovery, Compassion Fatigue, Juvenile Justice, Illinois Student Assistance Commission, and Effective Leadership. Conferences Supported by DRS: Illinois Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired; Illinois Association of Agencies and Community Organizations for Migrant Advocacy; Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees; Latino Mental Health Conference; Statewide Transition Conference, Illinois Assistive Technology Conference.

DRS conducts periodic surveys of field office staff, including supervisors, counselors and case coordinators. The most recent staff survey was in the summer of 2019. Staff were asked about their training needs and the format in which they would like to receive the training. Most of the respondents preferred face to face trainings but they also requested webinars, online training, and videos. The top training requests for field office staff were burnout and stress management, conflict resolution, time management, customer service and telephone etiquette. The top VR-related training requests were college cases, IPE development, transition, STEP cases and certification. 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 VR counseling, including counseling and guidance.

All staff are required to take a four-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 onsite training in field offices. Training focuses on job development skills, communication with employers and preparing customers for job interviews.

DRS makes training available in rehabilitation technology to all staff. DRS employs rehabilitation technology specialists who provide onsite consultation to counselors and assists 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 onsite 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.

i. 4. B. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

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 field staff upon request. In the last year the library has added new materials such as the Disability Handbook, Ex-Offenders Reentry guide, Customer Service Counts, and Conflicts in the Workplace: Sources and Solutions. DRS makes use of its intranet system to provide linkages to research sources and other new information relating to the field of rehabilitation. DRS supports staff participation in disability-related conferences within the state so that staff can learn about 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 Individual Placement and Support (IPS) services for persons with mental illness involves sharing research findings in a structured way with staff.

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 traveling to training events. DRS has made use of an RSA quality grant to purchase video equipment, laptop computers and microphones to establish the capability for a 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. DRS has also worked with contractors 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. 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. Staff response to webinar technology for training has been very positive and DRS anticipates utilizing this format more often in the future. DRS has also started using YouTube videos to provide instructions on VR rules and policies. A new training technology is currently being piloted in cooperation with a company called SIMmersion, LLC. This company provides job interview skills training through simulated interviews. The participant works through three different levels to practice easy, medium and difficult interview skillsets.

i. 5. Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

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 to qualify for bilingual positions.

DRS also works with individuals whose primary language is one other than English, Spanish or American sign language. While the number 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 also uses a telephone-based translation service which can provide instant translations in over 200 languages through a company called Propio which requires only the use of two telephones. This company also provides video interpreting for sign language. When professional translators are not available, DRS works with family members or volunteer translators from community or religious organizations who can assist the individual.

i. 6. Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Coordination of the CSPD and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Relationship to IDEA: DRS staff provide services annually to thousands of young people with disabilities, most of whom receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Approximately, 11,126 young people participated in the Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP) in 2019, 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. Approximately, 577 young people participated in non-STEP transition in 2019, which meant they had an open case with DRS but not currently participating in the program. There were also 659 students with disabilities participating in the Fast Track Transition program for the year 2019.

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.

Since 2018 DRS management staff have met quarterly with members of the management team from the Illinois State Board of Education, with facilitation by the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT). These meetings have contributed to a deeper understanding of the services and programs offered by each party. In 2019 ISBE staff solicited DRS managers to present at the summer Special Education Directors Conference, providing a key leadership group with information on how pre-employment transition services are provided through DRS.

j. 1. A. With the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;

Needs Assessment Framework. DRS has utilized a multiple component model for needs assessment purposes. The general idea is to build on existing information and evaluate any changes in data that reflect changes in customer needs. The premise is that customer needs tend to be fairly consistent from year to year but that trends can be identified which provide information on services needed going forward. The factors utilized by DRS include examining disability statistics, obtaining stakeholder input and conducting surveys. The general finding of these various sources is that the population is shrinking in Illinois, while the population of people with disabilities is growing slowly. The primary growth factors are in the minority population groups, particularly Latinos, as well as the ongoing growth in the number of individuals with autism.

Disability Statistics. There are two recent estimates of disability prevalence for Illinois. The first is from the American Community Survey for 2017, which shows a total of 675,092 working age Illinoisans reporting a disability, or 8.7 percent of the population. ACS respondents reported an average of 1.8 impairments each, meaning that most reported more than one impairment.

The Disability Statistics Compendium 2018 edition shows a total of 691,452 working age persons with disabilities, or 8.7 percent of the population. This represents an increase of 23,810 or 3.6 percent compared to the 2014 figure of 667,643. DRS will utilize the Compendium estimate for the 18-64 population. In addition, an interpolated figure of 25,166 individuals age 16 and 17 were added to create an overall estimate of 716,619 or roughly 716,600 individuals aged 16 to 64 that could potentially benefit from vocational rehabilitation services.

The Compendium data shows the following distribution of prevalence by impairment (or "difficulty" as phrased in the survey): Hearing impairments: 127,941 persons or 18.5 percent of those reporting an impairment; Visual impairments: 131,316 persons or 19.0 percent; Cognitive impairment: 279,394 persons or 40.4 percent; Ambulatory impairments: 328,153 persons or 47.5 percent; Self-care impairments: 125,710 persons or 18.2 percent; and Independent living impairments: 254,706 persons or 36.8 percent. Percentages total more than 100 percent since respondents reported an average of 1.8 impairments each.

Generally speaking, the disability categories used in the ACS and Compendium reports are of limited value for comparison to VR service categories. The vision and hearing categories are the

most comparable. In the most recent state fiscal year, customers with vision impairments made up 3.7 percent of those receiving services, and individuals with hearing impairments made up 5.5 percent of the total. Persons with physical disabilities, including ambulatory impairments, made up just 6.2 percent of the DRS service population. In broad terms persons in the category of cognitive impairments, including intellectual disability, autism, mental illness and learning disabilities, made up 61 percent of the total service population. The self-care and independent living impairment categories do not translate well to the VR impairment and cause system of categorizing disabilities.

It should be noted that the working age prevalence value for Illinois at 8.8 percent remains lower than the figure for the US as a whole of 10.3 percent. This difference has been consistent for several years. In 2011 the Illinois prevalence figure was 10.4 percent while the national figure was 12.2 percent. There is no known explanation for the overall reduction in working age disability at the national level or in Illinois, nor is there a convenient explanation for why Illinois remains lower than the national average.

Compendium data show that the employment rate for working age persons with disabilities increased from 34.9 in 2015 to 38.1 in 2017. An additional 30,231 individuals with disabilities were working in 2017 compared to 2015. The employment rate for working age persons without disabilities increased from 76.7 to 77.6 percent, although there was a decrease of 37,941 individuals working from 2015 to 2017. Together these statistics combine to show that the gap between employment for persons with disabilities and those that do not have disabilities declined in Illinois from 41.8 in 2015 to 39.5 in 2017.

There was virtually no change in the poverty rate for individuals with disabilities in Illinois, with 25.7 percent in poverty in 2015 and 25.5 percent in 2017. However, due to the increase in the number of individuals with disabilities, the rate reflects an increase of 4,781 individuals with disabilities living in poverty.

The gap between the median earnings of Illinoisans with disabilities and those without disabilities increased from \$12,205 in 2015 to \$14,109 in 2017. Between 2015 and 2017 the median earnings for individuals with disabilities increased by just \$384 (+1.7%) compared to the median earnings of non-disabled individuals which increased by \$2,288 (+6.7%). The median earnings for individuals with disabilities in 2017 was \$22,492 compared to those of non-disabled individuals whose median earnings was \$36,601.

Rate of health insurance coverage for individuals with disabilities in Illinois declined slightly from 93.2 percent in 2015 to 92.7 percent in 2017, although this remains somewhat higher than the rate for persons that do not have disabilities at 90 percent. About 55 percent of Illinoisans with disabilities continue to receive public health insurance.

The Disability Compendium also includes statistics on usage of Social Security disability benefits. Between 2015 and 2017 there was a decrease of 4,473 individuals receiving SSI disability benefits in Illinois, from 244,229 to 239,756 or 1.9 percent. At the same time there was a decrease of 2,728 in the number of children receiving SSI as blind or disabled, a reduction of 6.9 percent. Also at that time there was a decrease of 6,707 in the number of disabled workers

receiving SSDI, dropping from 288,827 to 282,120 or about 2.3 percent. The cause of these reductions in persons receiving Social Security benefits is unknown.

The 2019 population of Illinois was 12,671,821, a drop of 51,250 or 0.4 percent in one year. Illinois has seen a decline of 187,092 individuals since 2015, a decrease of 1.5 percent in just four years. While population overall is dropping, the state is also aging. The impact is seen in the relative changes for various age groupings from 2014 to 2018 (data from the Disability Statistics Compendium). The population under age five declined by 1.6 percent. The school age population (age 5 to 17) dropped by 2.4 percent. The working age population (age 18 to 64) declined by 1.4 percent, with the number reporting a disability increasing slightly by 0.7 percent. However, the number of working age persons with a disability who were employed increase by 3.6 percent between 2014 and 2018. The population age 65 and older increased by 6.6 percent during that time period, and the number of older individuals reporting a disability increased by 4.4 percent.

Special Education Data. In the period from 2015 to 2017 the number of students receiving special education services (age 6 to 21) in Illinois declined by 2,009 or 0.8 percent, from 258,906 to 256,897. At the same time, the overall school age population declined by 70,876 or 2.6 percent, from 2,725,494 to 2,654,618. This is consistent with the overall stagnation of population growth in Illinois and declining birth rates. The combined result of these changes is that the percentage of students receiving special education services increased from 9.5 to 9.7 from 2015 to 2017.

Current counts of students by disability category along with number and percent change from 2015 to 2017: Specific Learning Disabilities: 102,266 (-1,268 or -1.2%); Speech or Language Impairment: 35,222 (-2,177 or -5.8%); Intellectual Disabilities: 16,199 (-668 or -4.0%); Emotional Disturbance: 18,623 (-575 or -3.0%); Multiple Disabilities: 2,546 (+88 or +3.6%); Hearing Impairment: 3,142 (-125 or -3.8%); Orthopedic Impairments: 1,048 (-75 or -6.7%); Other Health Impairments: 34,911 (+914 or +2.7%); Visual Impairments: 991 (-20 or -2.0%); Autism: 22,146 (+1,069 or +5.1%); Deaf-Blindness: 22 (-1 or -4.3%); Traumatic Brain Injury: 643 (-8 or -1.2%); and Developmental Delay: 19,138 (+837 or +4.6%).

These results are consistent with ongoing patterns of change. The categories with the largest increases are autism and other health impairment, which have seen continuing growth in the last decade. The number of students with autism in Illinois has increased by 49 percent since 2010 and 176 percent since 2005. The number of students in the other health impaired category has increased by 29 percent since 2010 and 65 percent since 2005. Whether this represents changes in the use of diagnostic categories or actual changes in the population is unknown.

The percentage of students with an IEP that spent 40 percent or more time in a regular classroom remained unchanged at 79 percent. In Illinois ongoing efforts have led to a high level of performance in implementing transition plans for students with disabilities. As of 2018 99.2 percent of students age 16 and older had an IEP that met all transition planning requirements, according to the State Board of Education. Approximately 77 percent of students were shown to be employed, enrolled in post-secondary education or some other training program within a year after leaving high school.

2018 Needs Assessment Online Survey. In 2018 DRS conducted a needs assessment survey using an online methodology. Just under 1,000 valid responses were received, about half from transition age youth and half from older individuals. About two-thirds of respondents were individuals with disabilities and the remaining third family members or guardians responding on behalf of a person with a disability. Respondents rated 11 typical VR services on a seven-point scale with end labels where 1 was "Lowest Need" and 7 was "Highest Need". Each service included a brief description of what the service category includes, for example: "Self-Employment: Help planning for and starting your own business" or "Assistive Technology Services and Support: Special equipment and electronic devices to help with reading, speaking or using a computer". While this approach was intended to make clear what services were being rated, in some instances it might not have worked as intended. For example, the distinction between ordinary job placement services and customized employment might be understood by VR professionals, but to someone reading the survey they seem quite similar: "Job Placement Services: Help in finding a job that matches individual skills" and "Customized Employment: Help getting a job or starting a business based on individual strengths and needs". Indeed, both services had very similar high need ratings.

A key issue with the survey is that respondents tended to make extreme ratings, using the "7" rating on 30 percent of all responses. This is likely an artifact of the presentation of the rating options on the screen when completing the survey. Respondents also utilized the "1" rating 21 percent of the time and used the ratings 2 through 6 just 49 percent of the time. So while there were some differences between the rated services, the degree of variation was limited due to the rating scale issue. This makes the interpretation of survey results less meaningful for planning purposes.

The following need ratings were observed, ranked by the highest rated need, along with the percentage of highest need ratings: job placement: 5.3 need rating, 41.1% percent highest need; customized employment: 5.1 need rating, 38.6% highest needs; vocational training: 4.9 need rating, 32.8% highest need; on-the-job training: 4.7 need rating, 31.3% highest need; college support: 4.7 need rating, 40.3% highest need; supported employment: 4.6 need rating, 30.5% highest need; benefits planning: 4.0 need rating, 21.5% highest need; vocational evaluation: 4.0 need rating, 20.5% highest need; transportation: 3.9 need rating, 26.6% highest need; assistive technology: 3.2 need rating, 17.4% highest need; and self-employment: 3.0 need rating, 15.0% highest need.

The ratings overall indicate that respondents as a whole were interested in assistance with finding a job and with training to gain skills for employment. Interest in benefits planning was limited in that it applies only to individuals receiving Social Security. Self-employment as a VR service is used by only a small number of individuals each year, and consequently it had a very low need rating. And while assistive technology is vitally important for a subset of the VR service population, it is not utilized by the majority of customers and so its low need rating is not surprising. The low rating for transportation may seem surprising since a lack of transportation is mentioned with some frequency in surveys and public forums. Transportation had more "lowest need" than "highest need" responses, which seems to indicate that one's response depends on whether transportation is available or not.

A subset of questions was asked only of transition age youth responding to the survey. A total of 49 youth completed the survey. The same issue with consistently high ratings applies to this data. The following need ratings were observed, ranked by the highest rated need, along with the percentage of highest need ratings: work-based learning experiences (paid): 4.9 need rating, 29.4% highest need; job exploration counseling: 4.8 need rating, 27.6% highest need; workplace readiness training: 4.8 need rating, 31.9% highest need; instruction in self-advocacy: 4.7 need rating, 27.4% highest need; counseling on post-secondary education: 4.4 need rating, 28.0% highest need; and work-based learning experiences (unpaid): 4.4 need rating, 20.7% highest need.

For both the general services ratings and the pre-employment transition services ratings, there was no consistent variation observed when comparing responses by type of disability, gender, race, or age. While there were some specific data points of interest, such as blind respondents having a higher interest in assistive technology and self-employment, much of the variation in responses did not form meaningful patterns.

DRS intends to issue a request for proposal in 2020 to engage a professional survey organization to conduct a need assessment survey on a much larger scale. The current sample size is not sufficient to allow for useful comparisons among categories such as race and ethnicity, gender, age, disability type or economic status. The larger scale study will need to incorporate a variety of methods to ensure participation by people with disabilities across the state, including those from targeted communities.

Stakeholder Representation DRS has two representative groups of stakeholders: the Facility Advisory Committee, consisting of representatives of community rehabilitation program agencies; and the STEP Advisory Committee, consisting of representatives of school districts that provide pre-employment transition services to students under third-party cooperative agreements with DRS. These groups each meet regularly with DRS senior managers to identify program concerns and express needs that have been identified in their local communities.

In 2019 DRS held a series of seven community forums across the state. The morning session focused on CRP issues and the afternoon session focused on transition issues. Over 300 individuals representing over 200 provider agencies attended the forums. The overall tone of the meetings was positive, in part due to longstanding relationships between DRS staff and provider staff. The CRP sessions identified these key issues: how to improve the referral process to and from DRS so that individuals can receive services in a timely manner; concerns regarding providing services to individuals whose primary language is not English; and how customized employment can be incorporated into the DRS contract structure. Transition issues included: protecting the confidentiality of students and family members while ensuring that students continue to receive services; how best to move students from potentially-eligible status to eligible status without service interruption; and the appropriate process for documenting provision of pre-employment transition services within the DRS system.

Participants in both sessions expressed an interest in creating a more efficient process for moving students from school-based to community partner-based services at the conclusion of high school. A general consensus is that DRS providers are interested in effectively managing the

existing service structure rather than identifying new services or programs. This is due, in part, to a feeling that providers are insufficiently staffed and experiencing financial concerns.

j. 1. B. Who are minorities;

Data from the most recent Disability Statistics Compendium shows that 35.7 percent of all working age persons in Illinois with disabilities are employed. However, there is considerable variability by race in terms of likelihood of employment. Among white working age persons with disabilities 38.5 percent are employed, while 34.7 percent working age Latinos with disabilities are employed and 44.3 percent of working age Asians with disabilities. However, only 24.6 percent of working age African Americans with disabilities report being employed, a clear disparity compared to other groups. As the ongoing DRS needs assessment process unfolds consideration will be given to identifying racial disparities and addressing them through program initiatives.

Survey data relating to needs of minorities with disabilities indicate that an ongoing issue remains services available in the preferred language of the individual. Language access is more available in the highly populated Chicago area, where vendor agencies utilize staff with appropriate language skills. In other areas of the state this continues to be a challenge. The increased availability of telephone language translation services and phone-based apps for translation has improved language accessibility to some degree in all parts of the state.

j. 1. C. Who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

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 audiologists and vision professionals to develop referrals for VR services. In recent years the number of deaf-blind individuals served at the Chicago training facility for the blind has grown significantly. 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 meets regularly with the Illinois Advisory Board on Deaf Blindness, a group composed primarily of individuals who are deaf-blind. This group offers its assistance to DRS in expanding services to this low incidence population.

DRS is involved in an ongoing effort to implement a system of individual placement services (IPS) programs for individuals with serious mental illness. Based on the success of the IPS model, DRS intends to continue gradual expansion of IPS services as funding allows. In addition, DRS is involved in expanding the scope of IPS services to individuals with developmental disabilities including individuals with autism and autism spectrum disorder. IPS research indicates that the model has great potential in helping individuals with a variety of disabilities. 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.

Survey data most frequently mention the needs of individuals with autism or autism spectrum disorders. The number of cases served by DRS where autism is the primary disability continues to rise each year. Community providers have a good level of success in assisting individuals with autism in obtaining employment, although this is at a somewhat lower rate than for other disabilities. DRS continues to work with community agencies to identify specific service options that will be of greatest benefit to this population.

j. 1. D. Who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and

DRS has cooperated extensively with the state Title I agency around disability initiatives from that agency funded by the Dept. of Labor. This involves local area cooperation and in many cases joint enrollment of individuals in Title I and VR services. A major statewide effort regarding service integration has increased the degree of interaction and cooperation between VR staff and other workforce staff at the local level. A specific focus has been on how local workforce partners can move beyond communication to a higher level of collaboration. For VR staff this has involved reaching out to local partners to identify methods of ensuring that individuals with disabilities can receive appropriate services regardless of which element of the workforce system they contact first.

j. 1. E. Who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.

The 2018 online needs assessment survey referenced above indicated that youth with disabilities express a high level of need for pre-employment transition services. While the survey had limitations, the overall intent of the respondents was clear. DRS identified a need to provide services to younger (14- and 15-year-old) students who were unlikely to participate in other transition programs. DRS initiated contracts with 22 community providers and eventually connected over 1,000 to pre-employment transition services through this mechanism. DRS also identified a need in Chicago where the local school district was unable to provide community work-based learning experiences. DRS developed contracts with community rehabilitation program agencies to provide that element of pre-employment transition services which was otherwise unavailable to a large number of students.

j. 2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and

DRS believes that the system of community rehabilitation programs in the state is well-developed and adequate to meet the needs of vocational rehabilitation program customers. DRS continues to examine the need for CRP services through various mechanisms. DRS meets regularly with a statewide committee of CRP representatives (the Facility Advisory Council) to improve services provided by CRPs in Illinois. DRS also conducted online surveys of CRP agencies in 2017 and 2019 to identify issues and concerns. As noted above, DRS conducted a series of seven community forums with CRPs to provide an opportunity for an in-depth discussion of relevant issues.

j. 3. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

As discussed elsewhere in the plan, DRS has made several efforts to identify the needs of students and youth with disabilities. DRS believes it is capable of meeting the essential needs of students with disabilities through ongoing expansion of its existing program options. In the most recent state fiscal year DRS served nearly 12,000 students with disabilities. The goal going forward is to identify specific areas of the state where program expansion is needed most. This will entail the use of a more sophisticated, large-scale needs assessment methodology than has been used in the recent past.

DRS continues to meet four times a year with the STEP Advisory Council, a group representing school districts contracted by DRS to provide pre-employment transition services through the STEP program. This group helps identify issues and concerns about transition services as they are experienced at the local level. DRS believes that this mechanism is very important for managing the program and gaining an understanding of ongoing needs.

k. 1. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services

To estimate the number of possibly eligible individuals in the State DRS uses disability data from the U.S. Census Bureau as compiled in the Disability Statistics Compendium. Using the most recent Census data on disability prevalence and the most recent estimate of the Illinois population, DRS estimates that there are 716,600 individuals with disabilities in the state aged 16 to 64 who are possibly eligible for the VR program. Of that number, DRS estimates that there are 558,950 who would qualify for services under the DRS order of selection policy, and 157,650 who would not be likely to meet the State's order of selection policy. In addition, DRS estimates that there are 81,400 individuals with disabilities who are possibly eligible for VR services under Title VI, Part B. Of the 558,950 likely to qualify under the policy, DRS estimates that there are 193,500 who would be in the most significant disability category, 128,950 who would be in the very significant disability category, and 236,500 that would be in the significant disability category.

k. 2. A. The VR Program;

In the VR program, DRS estimates that 39,315 individuals will be served in PY2020.

k. 2. B. The Supported Employment Program; and

In the supported employment program utilizing Title IV Part B funds, DRS estimates that 120 individuals, all in the most significant disability category will be served in PY2020.

k. 2. C. Each priority category, if under an order of selection.

In the VR program, DRS estimates that 19,895 individuals in the most significant disability category will be served in PY2020, along with 15,930 individuals in the very significant disability category and 3,490 individuals in the significant disability category. No services will be provided to individuals in the category of individual with a disability.

k. 3. The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and

For PY2020 DRS estimates that there are approximately 157,650 individuals who would be eligible for VR services but not be in an open category of the order of selection policy.

k. 4. The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

For PY2020 DRS estimates that \$116,470,000 federal VR funds will be available, along with \$31,520,000 in non-federal funds for a total program budget of \$147,990,000. With an estimated 39,315 individuals to be served this equals \$3,764 in total funds per person served, with \$2,962 in federal funds and \$802 in non-federal funds.

For the most significant disability category, the average total cost is expected to be \$3,786, with \$2,980 in federal funds and \$806 in non-federal funds. Total spending for the most significant disability category is estimated to be \$75,326,900, where \$59,282,270 are federal funds and \$16,044,630 are non-federal funds.

For the very significant disability category, the average total cost is expected to be \$3,772, with \$2,968 in federal funds and \$803 in non-federal funds. Total spending for the very significant disability category is estimated to be \$60,083,950, where \$47,266,070 are federal funds and \$12,797,880 are non-federal funds.

For the significant disability category, the average total cost is expected to be \$3,604, with \$2,837 in federal funds and \$768 in non-federal funds. Total spending for the significant disability category is estimated to be \$12,579,150, where \$9,899,790 are federal funds and \$2,679,360 are non-federal funds. No services will be provided to individuals in the category of individual with a disability and no funds will be expended.

DRS projects that all available funds, program income and carryover, will be expended on individuals in the open categories of the order of selection policy. DRS does not expect to have sufficient funds to serve additional individuals in the closed category of the order of selection.

l. 1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions

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.

1. 2. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs

The following goals are established for the Division of Rehabilitation Services:

1. Achieve and exceed 6,000 competitive employment outcomes annually.
DRS believes it is reasonable to establish a consistent metric of 6,000 competitive employment outcomes per year. In the last five years, DRS has averaged 5,251 outcomes with a high of 5,538 and a low of 4,990. To attain the 6,000 outcome level the following draft targets are established: 5,750 competitive employment outcomes in PY2020 (FY2021), 6,000 in PY20201 (FY2022), 6,250 in PY2022 (FY2023) and 6,500 in PY2023 (FY2024). DRS finished the most recent fiscal year with 5,100 outcomes and we can shoot for 5,500 in our current fiscal year.
2. Move at least 100 individuals per year from 14(c) employment into competitive integrated employment.
Our goal is to make consistent progress on creating competitive integrated employment opportunities for individuals working in subminimum wage settings. This will be accomplished using a variety of strategies, including: use of supported employment models; use of customized employment models; and development of new business models for agencies currently acting as 14(c) employers. The numerical targets are modest, but the main focus is on building a successful system for creating employment opportunities. The draft targets are: 100 individuals moving from 14(c) to competitive integrated employment in PY2020 (FY2021), 150 in PY20201 (FY2022), 200 in PY2022 (FY2023) and 250 in PY2023 (FY2024).
3. By the conclusion of PY2023 (state FY2024), DRS, working in partnership with the State Board of Education and local education authorities, will ensure that 100,000 students with disabilities engage in pre-employment transition services during their time in school. WIOA requires all students with disabilities to receive pre-employment transition services. This requirement does not fall entirely on the VR agency. Rather, State government as a whole is given responsibility, including state and local education authorities as well as the VR agency.

We envision at least three levels of engagement with PTS. The first is participation in the STEP program, which involves individuals determined eligible for VR services and who have an active Individualized Plan for Employment that includes PTS. This program served 11,126 students in the most recent program year. The second mode of engagement is provision of services to potentially eligible students with disabilities through the Fast Track Transition program. This program is operated by vendor agencies under contract to DRS. In FY2019 the Fast Track program served 659 students.

The third mode of engagement will involve an improved level of coordination with local school systems. DRS will work with local schools and the State Board to enhance the understanding of PTS on the part of teachers and school administrators. Our belief is that most students with disabilities receive some form of PTS through participation in the transition plan developed beginning at age 14. The Illinois transition plan requires schools to address goals in the areas of employment, post-secondary education and independent living for all transition age students with an IEP. Many of the activities contained in the transition plans are equivalent to services

defined as PTS under WIOA, but there is presently no means to account for provision of these services as PTS. DRS proposes to build upon the existing system to enable schools across Illinois to validate provision of PTS to students whether or not they participate in VR services through DRS

4. Increase earnings at case closure and at the second quarter follow up for individuals closed as competitive employment outcomes.

It is well known that people with disabilities are less likely to be employed compared to people that don't have disabilities and are also more likely to be employed part time. The typical VR customer closed as successful by DRS works about 26 hours per week, with many working even fewer hours. Regardless of the hourly wage, part time work means lower overall earnings. VR counselors should work with their customers to identify opportunities for full time employment whenever possible.

5. Establish a process for transfer of individuals completing supported employment through DRS to receive support under the DDD waiver program.

DRS and DDD recently completed a new agreement regarding services to mutual customers. A key component is ensuring that individuals who have completed 24 months in VR-funded supported employment can be transferred to receive ongoing support from the DDD waiver program. This is a typical arrangement in many states but has not taken place consistently in Illinois.

6. Increase co-enrollment of VR customers in other WIOA programs.

A basic tenet of the workforce system under WIOA is that an individual experiencing barriers to employment should be able to receive services regardless of which WIOA partner is the main provider. Receiving services from more than one WIOA partner is considered co-enrollment and should be encouraged whenever possible. This has not been a priority for DRS but it is something we should focus on more going forward.

7. Establish a career pathways model for students with disabilities served by DRS.

Various education and workforce programs utilize the concept of career pathways to guide services to individuals seeking employment. The general idea is that it is worthwhile to engage students with career concepts and the understanding that various jobs are available in a given industry with differing credential requirements. Rather than identify a job for an individual, the career pathways approach helps that individual understand how that job can lead to a career based on additional training and education. While DRS has been a leader in serving students with disabilities, we are lagging behind in adopting a career pathways approach for the students we serve. DRS should consider establishing pilot projects in selected locations, partnering with school districts and community colleges in those areas.

8. DRS will become a disability neutral organization, serving any person regardless of his or her disability.

DRS will revisit policies and procedures throughout the agency to ensure that the VR program is capable of serving any individual regardless of disability. The policy review and revisions will be completed by June 20, 2021.

9. Expand the IPS program to reach additional populations likely to benefit from the IPS approach, including youth with disabilities and individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism.

IPS is an evidence-based practice of providing vocational services to persons with disabilities. IPS was initially focused on individuals with serious mental illness, but additional research has shown that IPS principles and methods are of benefit to a wider range of people with disabilities. DRS will continue to expand IPS by reaching out to specific populations of persons with disabilities and identifying qualified providers to initiate services.

10. Establish an aggressive system of information, education and outreach to targeted populations to promote the growth of the customer base in the DRS VR program. DRS will use an access navigator approach to identifying potential customers who can benefit from VR services in terms of achieving a competitive integrated employment outcome. DRS intends to contract with a variety of community partner agencies across the state that have connections to individuals in targeted communities that may not be aware of the benefits of the VR program. Referrals to the DRS VR program have declined by 17 percent in the last five years. In order to achieve growth in employment outcomes, that decline must be reversed. In addition to facilitating referrals to the VR program, the access navigator model will ensure that individuals with disabilities are connected to other community supports that might otherwise inhibit their participation in VR services.

11. Work with other WIOA partners to build the capacity to exchange data in a manner to protects confidentiality but which enables efficient cooperation among partners and improves the effectiveness of the workforce system.

The implementation of the workforce system in Illinois has been hampered by a lack of data exchange methodology or framework. While individual partner agencies have useful systems for collecting and managing information on the individuals they serve, the system as a whole is inefficient and duplicative. DRS is committed to ongoing efforts through the State Workforce Board to move toward a solution to the problem. This solution should build on the existing capacities of each agency.

I. 3. A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;

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. The goals and priorities are based on the most recently completed statewide needs assessment.

I. 3. B. The State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and

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. The goals and priorities are based on the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA.

1. 3. C. Other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

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.

m. 1. A. The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services

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 4. Individuals determined to have disabilities. For PY2018 and PY2019, 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. 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)). 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 Disability, 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, a significant disability or a 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, 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) intellectual disability, 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;

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.

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 multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

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 multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

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 multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

4) To be considered an individual with a disability, he or she must have a disability that results in an impediment to employment but which does not seriously limit his or her functional capacities.

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 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 workplace. 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 oneself 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 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 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.

m. 1. B. The justification for the order

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. For both FFY2018 and FFY2019 DRS projects that all available funds, program

income and carryover, will be expended on individuals in the open categories of the order of selection policy. DRS does not expect to have sufficient funds to serve additional individuals in the closed category of the order of selection.

m. 1. C. The service and outcome goals

In PY2020 DRS expects to serve 39,315 individuals. It is expected that the total number will be distributed as follows: persons with a most significant disability: 19,895; persons with a very significant disability: 15,930; and persons with a significant disability: 3,490. No individuals in the person with a disability category will be served. For PY2020 DRS expects to achieve 5,750 rehabilitated closures. It is expected that the total number will be distributed as follows: persons with a most significant disability: 2,655; persons with a very significant disability: 2,550; and persons with a significant disability: 545. No outcomes are projected for individuals in the person with a disability category.

m. 1. D. Time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order; and

The time period for the goals described above includes Program Year 2020, beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021.

For PY2018 the achievement of outcome goals is projected as follows. For persons with a most significant disability, 530 are expected to achieve an outcome within 12 months of beginning services; 665 within 18 months; 930 within 18 months; and 530 within 30 months. For persons with a very significant disability, 640 are expected to achieve an outcome within 12 months of beginning services; 890 within 18 months; 765 within 18 months; and 255 within 30 months. For persons with a significant disability, 190 are expected to achieve an outcome within 12 months of beginning services; 190 within 18 months; 110 within 18 months; and 55 within 30 months. No outcomes are projected for individuals in the person with a disability category.

No outcomes are projected for individuals in the person with a disability category.

m. 1. E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities

The DRS order of selection policy establishes priority for individuals with a most significant disability. Presently this is one of three categories of the order of selection policy now open for service. Financial estimates allow for services to individuals in all three categories to take place through PY2020. Consistent with longstanding policy, if financial circumstances change, other categories of the order of selection policy will be closed to services until only the most significant category remains open, at which time all new cases will be individuals in that category. It is not anticipated that such financial circumstances will arise as no similar situation has taken place in more than a decade. However, the policy in place is sufficient to ensure that individuals in the most significant disability category will have priority going forward in such an event.

m. 2. If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment

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. 1. Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services

While funding related to Title VI-B is uncertain at present, DRS provides the following projections for use of those funds. For PY2020, 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 PY2020, DRS will serve and employ 125 persons in supported employment utilizing Title VI Part B funds. In the most recent state fiscal year, DRS served 105 individuals in supported employment using Title VI Part B funds and an additional 1,217 using other funds.

n. 2. A. The provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and

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 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. Activities to be carried out for individuals receiving extended services include provision of ongoing support services at the job site or at another location, facilitation of natural supports at the job site, and regular contact with employers and other individuals supporting the worker in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement. Other supports will be made available as needed, including assistive technology where appropriate. Extended services will be available to

youth with a most significant disability for up to 48 months or until such time that the individual reaches age 25 and no longer meets the definition of "youth with a disability".

n. 2. B. How the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.

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. The Illinois Employment First effort is a mechanism to support additional cooperation between VR funded and Medicaid waiver funded employment programs for people with most significant disabilities. DRS and the state agency serving individuals with intellectual disabilities have reached an agreement to facilitate referrals of individuals requiring longer-term paid supports. DRS is also committed to continuing expansion of customized employment services as an option for youth with the most significant disabilities. DRS hopes to be able to build on experience from recent pilot projects for customized employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Ongoing discussions with the state developmental disabilities agency include exploring options for customized employment projects.

o. 1. The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities

DRS plans to use multiple strategies to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities in the course of this plan. The three primary strategies are as follows:

a. Significantly increased outreach and support for potential VR customers to increase referrals to the program. In PY2020 DRS will implement the Access Equity project. The purpose of the project is to substantially increase outreach efforts to persons with disabilities in targeted communities, particularly those of minority persons with disabilities and those whose primary language is other than English. DRS plans to establish contracts with multiple vendors that have established roots in these communities, and which have the resources to identify potential VR customers and connect them to DRS. In addition, the vendor agencies will provide ongoing support to VR customers throughout their participation in the program, connecting them to various community resources and government benefits that will enable their ongoing involvement in VR services. The idea is not only to provide information about the DRS VR program, but to support individuals who may not otherwise initiate an application to VR.

DRS also plans to continue the Community Partnership Initiative, which was established in 2018 and has proven successful in reaching out to over 7,000 persons with disabilities. While the initiative is only active for part of the year, the relationships established with the partner agencies have proven beneficial in expanding awareness of the VR program.

b. Continued development of a business engagement strategy to meet employer needs and create additional job opportunities for VR customers. In 2019 DRS established a workforce development unit (WDU) to significant increase the capacity to provide services to

businesses. A key step was creating a new job classification of business services consultant. This job was designed to focus more on communication skills and business-related experience than on skills or experience relating to rehabilitation. Of the first six consultants hired, none had backgrounds in rehabilitation counseling. The WDU also includes three staff classified as employment resource specialists. This is a legacy job classification more closely aligned with a counseling background. All WDU staff have received in-person and online training focused on communicating with businesses, presenting the case for VR services, working with large corporate employers, as well as training in how to promote disability awareness to employers. A centralized database has been developed to track employer contacts and relate those efforts to hiring of DRS customers. Each staff person has assignments to one or more local workforce development area and is charged with coordinating with the local business services team.

c. Encourage post-secondary education opportunities to help VR customers obtain full-time work and higher earnings. Completion of a post-secondary degree is an important factor in attaining a self-sufficient level of earnings. In PY2018 VR customers closed successfully after participating in post-secondary education had average annual earnings of \$24,210 compared to other successful closures from the program, who earned \$16,938 on average. Customers completing a university program earned an average of \$29,601 per year while community college completers earned \$21,862 on average. DRS believes that the VR program should do as much as possible to promote post-secondary education to assist customers in achieving better jobs that pay higher wages.

Since 2010 DRS has operated the Community College Initiative, which provides financial incentives to customers wishing to attend a 2-year program. In that time the number of customers attending community college programs has increased by 122 percent. In 2020 DRS intends to modify its financial participation rule to provide a more supportive framework for VR customers from families with median earnings who wish to attend a university program with DRS support. A detailed analysis of the existing financial participation rule shows that many individuals are not able to receive DRS financial assistance although their family income is near the median level for the state. A modification in this policy will enable more VR customers to attend university programs and achieve an employment outcome with good earnings and benefits.

DRS will continue to work with the Talent Acquisition Program (TAP) coordinated by CSAVR. This is a cooperative effort of many state VR agencies to promote professional level employment for VR customers. While there are many internet sites that serve to connect applicants and employers, TAP is the only site that focuses on employment people with disabilities. Participating employers are aware that the applicant has a disability but this has proven to be a benefit in establishing communication between the parties. DRS also works with the National Employment Team (The NET). This program helps employers operating on a national or multi-state basis connect with VR programs in each state, facilitating referrals of applicants. While the NET is not focused on professional-level employment, the structure of most large corporate employers involves many such jobs in states where they operate.

o. 2. How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis

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. DRS initiated the loan to own program for distribution of assistive technology equipment in order to provide necessary devices to VR customers in a 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.

The technology team is also working closely with Blind Services staff to test assisted vision devices known as AIRA that promote safe travel and community integration. This is an exciting new development in assistive technology and DRS will soon be implementing a test of the technology.

o. 3. The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been 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. Individuals with disabilities who are minorities are served by DRS at a rate that reflects their proportion of the state population. However, it is acknowledged that minority individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, face additional barriers to employment and access to the labor market. DRS works with community providers that have a strong connection to particular minority communities, including the African-American, Latino and Asian communities. Providers in these communities provide services in a culturally appropriate manner and have access to employment both within minority communities as well as in the general labor market. Recent expansion of contractual services with providers representing the Asian communities in the Chicago area have been particularly successful in increasing employment for

that population. DRS also makes its services available to non-English speakers, both through employment of bilingual staff and through a translation service.

The Access Equity project described above is designed to improve access to the VR program for individuals in various communities throughout Illinois. It is expected that the vendors contracted for this project will represent racial and ethnic groups that might be considered underserved by the VR program. The addition level of outreach and a higher level of support are intended to make sure that more applicants come to the program and that more of those individuals remain in the program and achieve positive results.

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. In recent years DRS has worked closely with Helen Keller National Center, the primary resource in the US for deaf-blind services. This has included staff training and presentations as well as utilizing HKNC expertise in designing training environments for deaf-blind individuals served by DRS. DRS is currently working with HKNC to develop support services for deaf-blind individuals to increase their opportunities for sustaining competitive integrated employment. DRS works closely with the Illinois Advisory Board on Deaf-Blindness, a consumer group focused on improving service access for deaf-blind individuals.

An assessment of staff training needs identified a strong need for training in the medical aspects of disability for VR counselors and supervisors. DRS has developed an arrangement with an external online training entity to provide training on medical aspects as well as other topics such as low-incidence disabilities of interest to rehabilitation counselors.

DRS continues in its efforts to implement a system of individual placement and support services (IPS) programs, also 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. Fidelity reviews have proven to be a very strong tool for improving and shaping IPS services at the service provider level.

o. 4. The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services)

DRS is committed to improvement and expansion of services to students and youth with disabilities, building upon its existing strong level of support for that age group. For example, in the previous state fiscal year 63.4 percent of all persons served in the DRS VR program began receiving services prior to age 21, as were 49.8 percent of persons achieving a competitive employment outcome. Although this represents a high level of involvement, there is still room for improvement and achievement of greater levels of effectiveness.

While a variety of pre-employment transition services are being provided through existing arrangements with third-party providers, DRS initiated the Fast Track Transition program as an option for pre-employment transition services outside the framework of the longstanding STEP effort. This program works with 22 vendor agencies across the state, including 20 centers for independent living. The target population is students aged 14 and 15 that have not typically participated in STEP services. As of January 2020, over 1,000 students were participating in the Fast Track program. DRS anticipates continued expansion of this program in subsequent years depending on provider interest.

DRS intends to work with community rehabilitation programs and local school systems to establish a method for connecting students exiting high school with CRP services. Both CRP and school personnel report difficulties making referrals and establishing services soon after a student leaves school. The greater the time lapse after leaving school, the less likely that a student will become engaged with a community provider. Recent provider input suggests that individuals likely to benefit from supported employment services are particularly impacted by the need to arrange post-school services quickly. DRS will continue working with community partners to explore options relating to this issue.

o. 5. If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State

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.

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 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.

o. 6. Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA

Increased median earnings. 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). Each of these approaches is designed to identify individuals with higher expected earnings and gradually increase the proportion of these individuals served by DRS.

Increased employment retention. Employment retention is a function of an appropriate match between the job and the individual, as well as a satisfactory level of earnings. Full time work is associated with a higher level of employment retention than is part time work. Consequently, DRS counselors are encouraged to emphasize full time work to the greatest extent possible for VR customers. Also as noted above, DRS is attempting to increase enrollment in university and community college programs. Individuals with that level of education are much more likely to engage in full time employment. Increased achievement of postsecondary education credentials. DRS is engaged in an effort to expand enrollment in university and community college programs. To improve data quality, DRS has made modifications to its online case management system. These changes will result in improved tracking of measurable skill gains and achievement of degrees and credentials by customers pursuing postsecondary training.

o. 7. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development 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. DRS also continues a high level of participation in state and local efforts to promote service integration within the workforce system. 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. DRS will also pursue a strategy of expanding methods of communication, including electronic and computer connections, between DRS offices and local workforce centers. DRS has been involved with ongoing efforts through the state workforce board to create a system for electronic exchange of information between workforce partner agencies at the state and local level.

o. 8. A. Achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;

The goals established in this plan are consistent with DRS needs assessment activities described in this plan. The goals are closely aligned to WIOA reporting requirements, focusing on employment retention and earnings, essential objectives of the VR program. The strategies described in this plan are focused on making progress toward those goals. DRS believes that the

focus on employment, earnings and educational achievement are consistent with the needs of people with disabilities throughout the state.

o. 8. B. Support innovation and expansion activities; and

DRS continues to solicit suggestions from staff and stakeholders about service needs that can be the focus of innovation and expansion activities. In the fall of 2019 DRS management conducted seven community forums around the state that were attended by over 300 provider agency representatives. One aspect of the forums was soliciting input for innovation and expansion options for the VR program. The input received from these meetings is under review at this time. DRS has encouraged the IPS program system in its efforts to reach out to other disability populations, including persons with intellectual disabilities and persons with autism. Research suggests that the IPS model has benefits that are likely to benefit a variety of individuals with disabilities. DRS has also expanded its presence on social media as a means of promoting the VR program to potential customers.

o. 8. C. Overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.

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.

The Access Equity project described above is intended to address these concerns directly. The involvement of community-based agencies with substantial ties to the local population has the potential to greatly reduce communication concerns and improve ongoing program participation for VR applicants.

p. 1. A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals

Goal 1: Competitive Integrated Employment Outcomes DRS has revised the goals in this section based on current performance levels. DRS plans to increase the number of competitive integrated employment outcomes achieved each year, beginning with 5,600 in PY2017, then 5,950 in PY2018 and 6,300 in PY2019.

Results: This goal was not achieved. In terms of annual competitive integrated employment outcomes, DRS has fallen short of the expected levels of performance. In the last four fiscal

years (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2019) DRS has achieved 5,538, 4,990, 5,169 and 5,114 competitive employment outcomes. In large part this is due to difficulty filling staff vacancies in some parts of the state.

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.

Results: This goal was not achieved. For the two most recent fiscal years, the median earnings at the second quarter after exit were \$2,185 and \$2,206.

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.

Results: This goal was not achieved. For the most recent fiscal year, 50.1 percent of persons exiting the program were employed two quarters after exit.

Goal 4: Employment Retention at Four Quarters After Program Exit 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.

Results: This goal was not achieved. For the most recent fiscal year, 46.6 percent of persons exiting the program were employed four quarters after exit.

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.

Results: This goal was not achieved. The estimates used in establishing the goals proved not to be an accurate reflection of program achievement. In the most recent fiscal year (ending June 30, 2019) a total of 4,902 high school students graduated with a diploma and 392 post-secondary education students graduated with a degree (155 university students and 255 community college students). The combined total of 5,294 represents significant achievement for the students involved but as a total it is less than the stated goal for the year.

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.

Results: This goal was not achieved. DRS initially experienced difficulty in reporting measurable skill gains due to technical problems and inconsistent communication with staff. DRS has shown progress in measurable skill gains for post-secondary education students. In PY2017 a total of 1,038 measurable skill gains were reported for 664 students enrolled in post-secondary education. After subsequent staff training notable improvements were seen the following year. In PY2018 a total of 4,125 measurable skill gains were reported for 2,217 post-secondary students.

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.

Results: This goal was not achieved, in part due to inaccurate estimates made in establishing the goal. While DRS has around 3,500 VR customers engaged in post-secondary education programs in a typical year, the number going directly from high school to post-secondary training is lower than estimated. A total of 5,138 students graduated high school after participation in DRS transition services in 2018. Within the next year, 760 or 15 percent were enrolled in a post-secondary education program (548 in community college, 124 in a university and 18 in a technical institute).

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. This goal has been extended for the next two program years, with 50 new business engagements and 100 employment outcomes anticipated in PY2018 and 65 new business engagements and 125 employment outcomes in PY2019.

Results: This goal has achieved partial success. The business engagement team consisting primarily of VR counselors continues to function, and it has been joined by the staff of the recently formed workforce development unit. As a combined team they continue to enter data on business engagements into a central data-base. The level of success has not been as high as expected. In the most recent state fiscal year (ending June 30, 2019) DRS made initial contacts with 107 businesses and had follow-up contacts with 58 businesses contacted in previous years. A total of 51 VR customers associated with targeted businesses achieved competitive outcomes during the fiscal year, far below the expected number of 125. The projected figure for

the current year is that 90 individuals will achieve a successful VR closure, so while goals were not met there continues to be improvement in performance.

Goal 9: Continue Expansion of Innovative Program Options In PY2018 and PY2019 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.

Results: This goal was partially achieved. DRS continues to operate Project Search sites with continued success but has not been able to expand the number of providers due to limited provider interest. IPS programs have expanded the range of individuals served but DRS has not developed separately funded projects for those populations to date. Customized employment projects begun as pilots continue but are funded as supported employment contracts due to inconsistent documentation of customized employment principles.

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 90 percent performance-based contracts with community vendors in PY2018 and 95 percent in PY2019.

Results: This goal was achieved. In the most recent state fiscal year (ending June 30, 2019) a total of 98 percent of job placement and supported employment contracts issued by DRS were performance based.

p. 1. B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities

To some degree performance in PY2018 was limited by staff vacancies and having a cohort of relatively new staff. For a time, the hiring capability of the VR program was limited by factors within state government external to the program. In addition, transfers of counselors from the VR program to the expanding DRS home services program created a higher than usual number of VR counselor vacancies.

p. 2. A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals

The goal for PY2018, was to serve and employ 125 persons in supported employment utilizing Title VI Part B funds. This goal was achieved. In that year DRS served 1,230 individuals in supported employment, with 234 served using Title VI Part B funds and 996 served using other funds. DRS believes that additional outreach efforts will contribute to success in achieving supported employment goals in the coming program years.

p. 2. B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities

DRS has spent the last few years studying the supported employment issue and implementing changes to the contracting and funding structure behind the program. It is clear that DRS and at least some providers had different perspectives on the purpose and intent of the supported employment program. DRS efforts to ensure that supported employment services were targeted only to those for whom the service is appropriate resulted in a drop in total persons served. Since 2015 the number of individuals receiving supported employment services has remained consistent and DRS looks to build on that increase in the coming program years. The new performance-based contracting system is designed to align the interests of DRS, the provider and the customer so that individuals begin employment and receive appropriate supports that are gradually decreased until the individual achieves optimal independence. In addition, DRS is working with the state developmental disabilities agency to facilitate referrals of individuals likely to benefit from VR-funded supported employment services. Another major factor is that as Illinois increases its efforts to phase out reliance on subminimum wage the need for supported employment increases.

p. 3. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA

Employment Retention: Data for individuals exiting the program (either successfully or unsuccessfully) in 2018 show that 54.4 percent were employed during the second quarter after program exit. In addition, 43.5 percent of individuals exiting the program were employed during the fourth quarter after program exit.

Median earnings two quarters after program exit. Data for individuals exiting the program in 2018 showed median earnings of \$2,887 two quarters after program exit. This is higher than the figure of \$2,343 identified a year earlier.

Educational achievement. In the most recent fiscal year (ending June 30, 2019) a total of 4,902 high school students graduated with a diploma and 392 post-secondary education students graduated with a degree (155 university students and 255 community college students).

Measurable Skill Gains. In PY2018 a total of 4,125 measurable skill gains were reported for 2,217 students enrolled in post-secondary education.

p. 4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized

DRS has initiated several innovation and expansion activities since the previous plan. The development of the Fast Track Transition program to provide pre-employment transition services to potentially eligible students with disabilities represents a significant service expansion in the area of transition. The focus is on serving younger (14- and 15-year-old) students that have not typically been served in Illinois. As of January 2020, there were over 1,000 students in the program. DRS also has initiated an arrangement with the National Federation for the Blind to provide pre-employment transition services to students who are blind or visually impaired. DRS believes that the expertise of this national organization will be of great benefit to the students who participate. DRS also implemented the Community Partnership Initiative. This program involved over 120 community-based organizations, including faith-based organizations, fraternal

organizations and community groups. Community partners were engaged to identify potential VR customers in their community and deliver presentations on the DRS VR program and provide information on how to apply. Since September 2018 over 1,000 presentations have been made to over 7,000 individuals with disabilities and family members to provide information and education about DRS services.

q. 1. The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities

In the last several years DRS has seen a reduction in the total number of persons served in supported employment, although the current trend is toward increased participation. There was a decrease of 25 percent in the number of persons receiving supported employment services through DRS from 2012 to 2014. The number of persons served has increased by 8 percent from 2015 to 2017 and has remained at roughly the same level since that time at about 1,250 individuals. However, since 2017, the number of individuals receiving supported employment that were subsequently closed as successful employment outcomes dropped from 298 to 187, a decrease of 112 or 37.5 percent. DRS continues to explore options to identify individuals that are likely to benefit from supported employment services to reverse this trend.

In 2017, DRS implemented a new performance-based contracting system for supported employment. This was developed in conjunction with provider representatives, and increased the effective payment rate by 16 percent. The goal is to ensure that individuals become employed and receive necessary supports that are gradually reduced over time to achieve maximum independent functioning on the job. While the new contract format has maintained the overall number of persons served, the lack of effectiveness in achieving successful outcomes for supported employment participants is a concern.

In 2019, DRS completed a new working agreement the state developmental disabilities agency to increase referrals to the DRS supported employment program. This includes outreach to DD system case management entities in developing referrals to DRS supported employment. 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.

q. 2. The timing of transition to extended services

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 Title I 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 is in the process of completing a new agreement with the state DD agency which provides that individuals completing VR supported employment will be able to receive ongoing support through the DD agency. DRS also expects that many individuals currently on the waiting list for DD waiver services will apply for DRS supported employment services.

For youth with a most significant disability DRS utilizes available funds to provide extended services for a period of up to 48 months or until such time as the individual turns age 25 and no longer meets the definition of "youth with a disability".