

**STATE OF ILLINOIS WORKFORCE  
INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT  
UNIFIED STATE PLAN MODIFICATION  
FOR PROGRAM YEARS 2016-2020  
(JULY 1, 2016-JUNE 30, 2020)**



**Editor's Note**

The Departments of Labor and Education issued TEGL 6-17 which provides the “Required Elements for Submission of the Unified State Plan.” Final submission of the plan is through a federal portal. This document is structured for content to be entered into the federal portal.

The text highlighted in grey is the instructions and questions from the federal submission portal.

**II. Strategic Elements**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan, as well as to core programs.

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

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.

**1. Economic and Workforce Analysis**

**A. Economic Analysis**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include;

**i. Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations**

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

**ii. Emerging Industry Sectors and Occupation**

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

**iii. Employers' Employment Needs**

With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in 1 and 2 above, provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

**Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis**

**1. Economic and Workforce Analysis**

**A. Economic Analysis**

*Data and Information Collection*

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) employs the state's labor market economists and provides data and information to support state, regional and local workforce and economic development initiatives. The economic and workforce analysis presented highlights data that is publicly available and that supports an analytic process that is easily replicable using no-cost data sources. The state also engages businesses and regional and local partners to regularly and systemically analyze and validate complementary data. The long-term goal is to collect and develop the most robust data sources possible so that supply and demand projections benefit from as near to real-time information as possible.

The State of Illinois established an Interagency Data Team with representatives from the core program partners, including Employment Security, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce), Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) to select the data that is utilized in this economic and workforce analysis. The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board's Evaluation and Accountability Committee (IWIB EAC) joined the data team in reviewing and commenting on the new data represented within the modifications of the Unified State Plan.

Additionally, the IWIB EAC, in conjunction with the Integrated Business Services Team -- 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 compliment 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 appropriate data and information collection mechanisms for gathering and reporting on such 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, across and since the “Great Recession” during the final years of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The main narrative told by the numbers in Table 1 is that Illinois was struck hard by the economic downturn – harder than the nation overall, but not as hard as our fellow states in the Great Lakes region (IL, IN, MI, OH and WI). Between 2006 and 2011, the state’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) decreased by 0.8 percent. The GDP in the Great Lakes Region fared even worse, falling by 1.3 percent. On the other hand, the US GDP grew by 1.7 percent during the same period.

The story through 2016, the latest year data are available, shows that Illinois has lagged both the Great Lakes Region and the Nation in GDP growth. The last ten years have seen the state’s GDP increase by 4.9 percent, which is less than the region’s growth of 6.5 percent and the nation’s 12.3 percent growth. Illinois has also lagged in employment growth. The state’s employment has fallen 1.2 percent compared to a loss of 0.9 percent in the region and growth of 4.9 percent in the nation. Conversely, earnings in Illinois over the last ten years have increased more than the region (25.7 percent and 24.8 percent). However, earnings in the nation have surpassed both Illinois and the region, growing by 33.5 percent.

**Table 1: Illinois vs. Benchmark States vs. Nation:  
Change in GDP, Employment and Earnings over 10 years**

	Gross Domestic Product			Employment			Earnings		
	2006	2011	2016	2006	2011	2016	2006	2011	2016
<b>ILLINOIS</b>	<b>663,632</b>	<b>658,411</b>	<b>658,411</b>	<b>6,230,845</b>	<b>5,948,366</b>	<b>6,154,867</b>	<b>282,735,400</b>	<b>303,015,200</b>	<b>355,280,400</b>
Great Lakes Region*	2,126,436	2,098,238	2,264,585	22,562,628	21,140,893	22,355,545	906,517,200	949,849,900	1,131,176,400
United States	14,584,888	14,833,679	16,385,170	144,427,000	139,869,250	151,435,833	6,051,676,000	6,623,278,000	8,079,770,000

	Gross Domestic Product			Employment			Earnings		
	2006	2011	2016	2006	2011	2016	2006	2011	2016
<b>ILLINOIS</b>	<b>-0.8%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>-4.5%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>-1.2%</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>25.7%</b>
Great Lakes Region*	-1.3%	7.9%	6.5%	-6.3%	5.7%	-0.9%	4.8%	19.1%	24.8%
United States	1.7%	10.5%	12.3%	-3.2%	8.3%	4.9%	9.4%	22.0%	33.5%

\*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 \$2009 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 2024 for major industry sectors across Illinois. It is expected that the largest number of job openings will be created within the business services and health care sectors. Large percentage changes in employment are expected in leisure and hospitality, as well as in a resurgent construction sector. The IWIB will explore methods of gathering real-time information from businesses, making it readily available in a regional and local format that supports the information found within Table 2.

**Table 2: Illinois Employment by Major Industry Sector**

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Title	Base Year Employment 2014	Share of Statewide Base Year Employment 2014	Projected Year Employment 2024	Net Change 2014-2024	Ten-Year Percent Change 2014-2024	Location Quotient 2014
<b>TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>6,263,919</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>6,635,512</b>	<b>371,593</b>	<b>5.93%</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Agricultural Production	73,358	1.17%	70,148	-3,210	-4.38%	1.29
Natural Resources and Mining	9,833	0.16%	9,381	-452	-4.60%	0.25
Utilities	23,948	0.38%	23,874	-74	-0.31%	0.65
Construction	201,672	3.22%	226,721	25,049	12.42%	0.70
Manufacturing	579,027	9.24%	562,281	-16,746	-2.89%	1.03
Wholesale Trade	299,930	4.79%	318,781	18,851	6.29%	1.12
Retail Trade	604,463	9.65%	637,697	33,234	5.50%	0.86
Transportation and Warehousing	277,994	4.44%	299,620	21,626	7.78%	1.14
Information	99,093	1.58%	99,794	701	0.71%	0.75
Financial Activities	369,439	5.90%	388,402	18,963	5.13%	1.04
Professional and Business Services	915,447	14.61%	1,015,567	100,120	10.94%	1.04
Educational Services, Private and Public	566,444	9.04%	571,158	4,714	0.83%	1.01
Health Care and Social Assistance	764,153	12.20%	858,843	94,690	12.39%	0.84
Leisure and Hospitality	557,645	8.90%	616,483	58,838	10.55%	0.81
Personal and Other Services	287,622	4.59%	301,969	14,347	4.99%	1.47
Government*	351,610	5.61%	351,494	-116	-0.03%	0.39
Self Employed, Unpaid Family Workers and Others n.e.c.*	282,241	4.51%	283,299	1,058	0.37%	0.83

\*Location Quotients for "Government" and for "Self Employed, Unpaid Family Workers and Others n.e.c." are from 2012

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

Figure 1 utilizes percentage growth and a measure of industry importance in the state (location quotient), 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.

Figure 1: Bubble Chart Based on Table 2

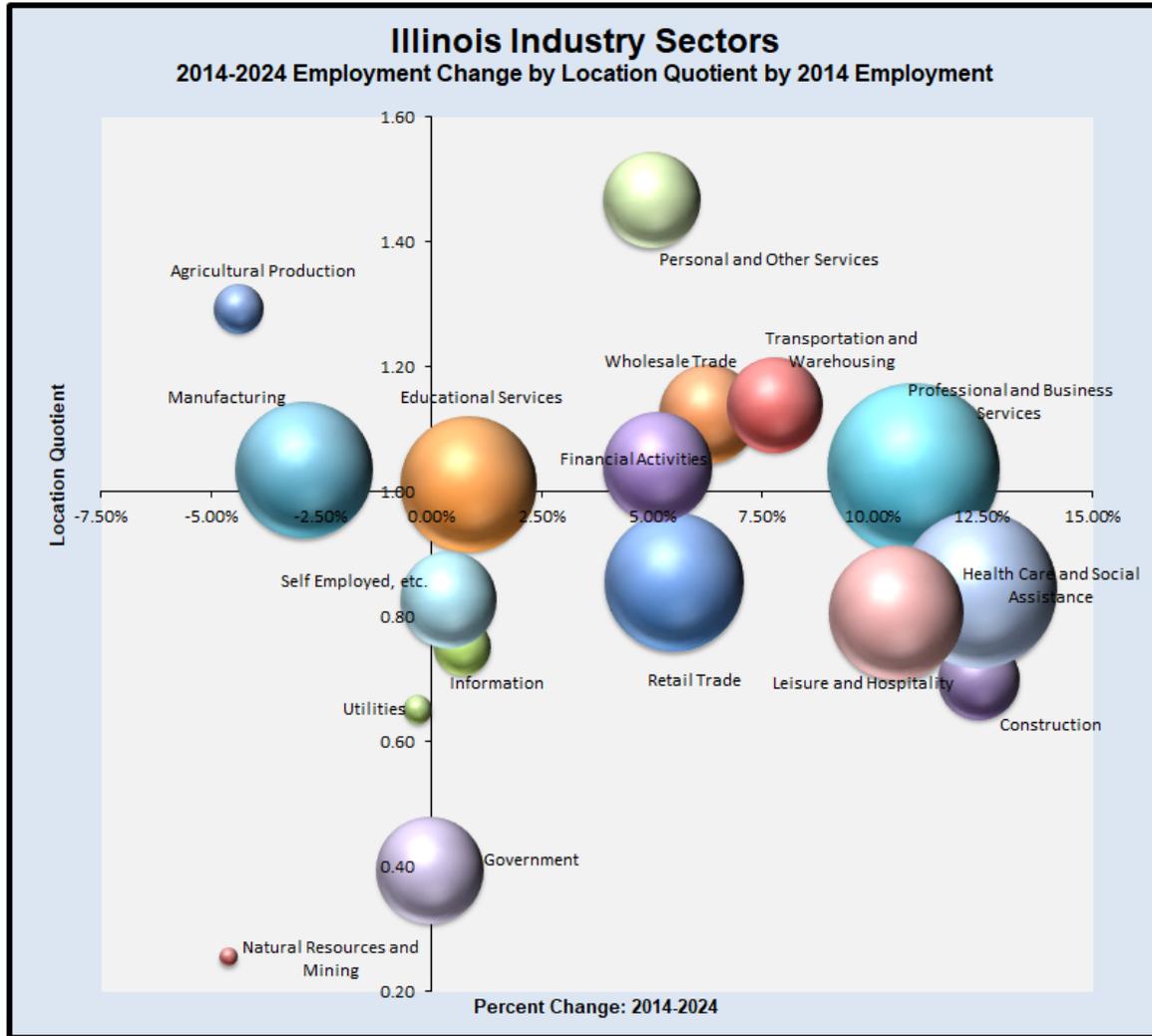
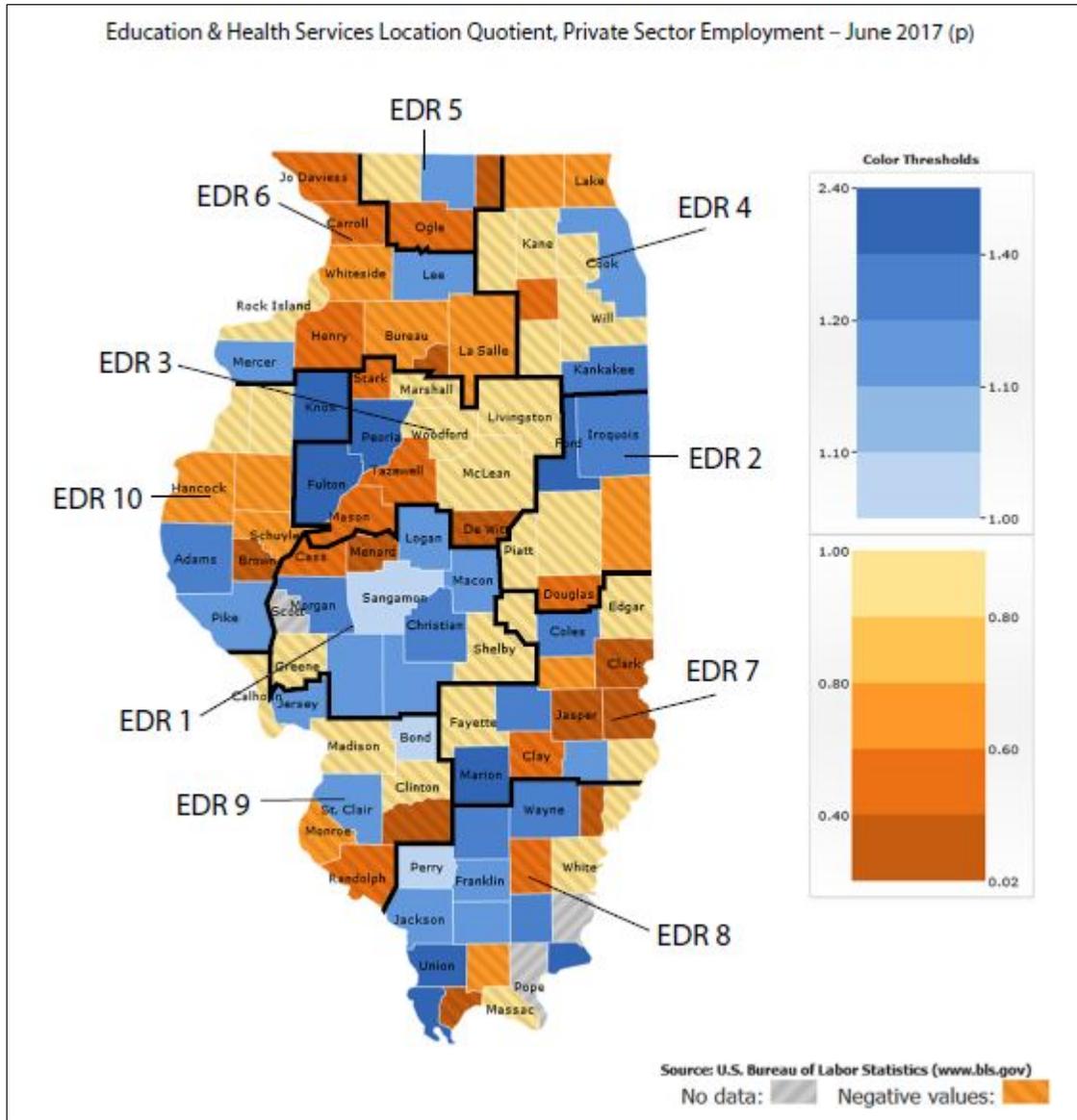


Figure 1 provides information on the “what” and “how much”, the sectors, projected employment changes and location quotients, respectively. However, there is a vital data point not available in this chart, the “where”. Using Bureau of Labor Statistics spatial analysis tools we are able to discern which regions and counties in Illinois enjoy a comparative advantage in each sector. (See [beta.bls.gov/maps/cew/us](http://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.

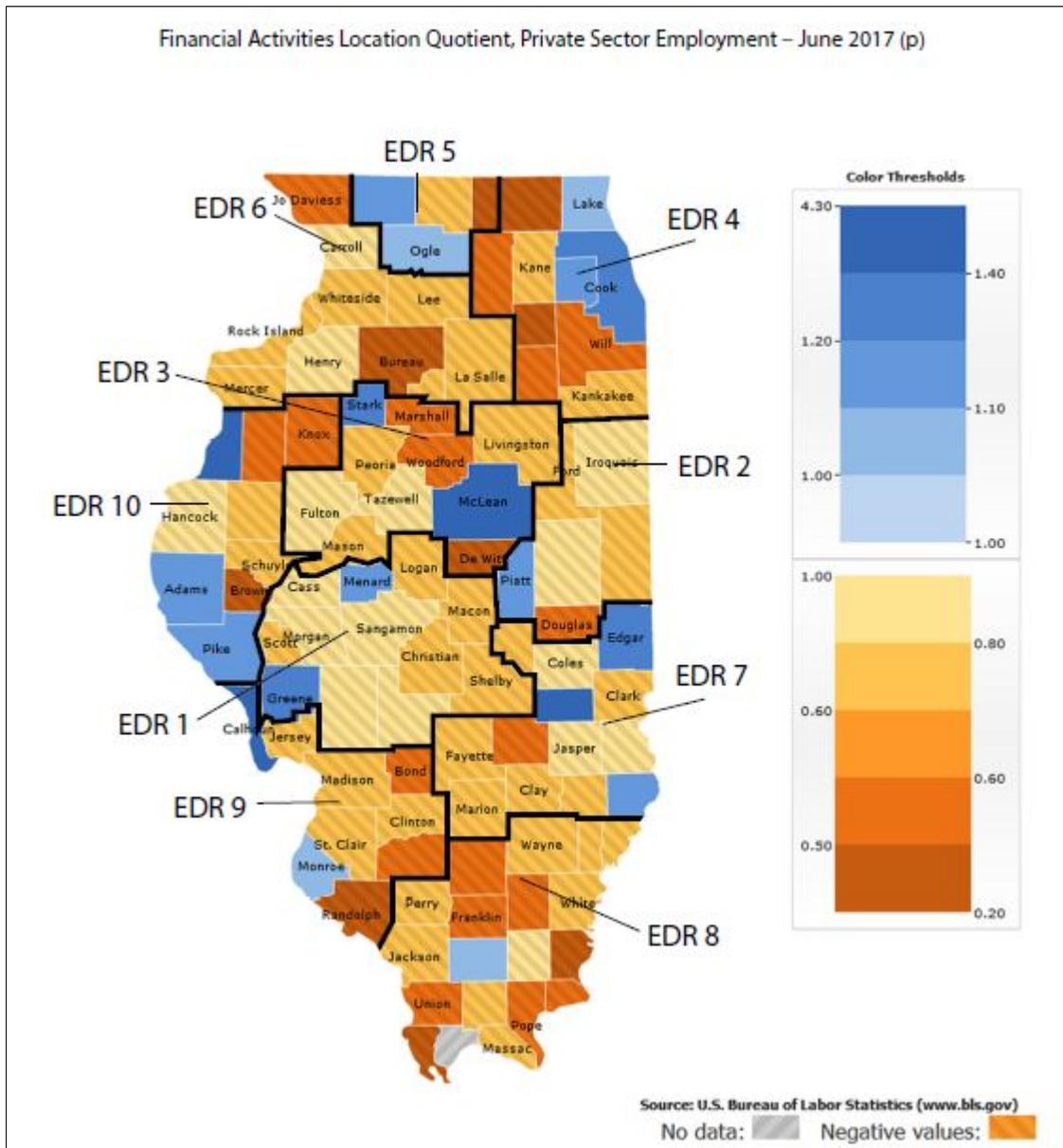
Regions with a comparative advantage will be encouraged and supported in efforts to exploit their situation. Regions with a comparative disadvantage that is not prohibitive will be encouraged and supported in efforts to address the root causes of their disadvantage.

Map 1: Education and Health Services Location Quotient, Private Sector Employment



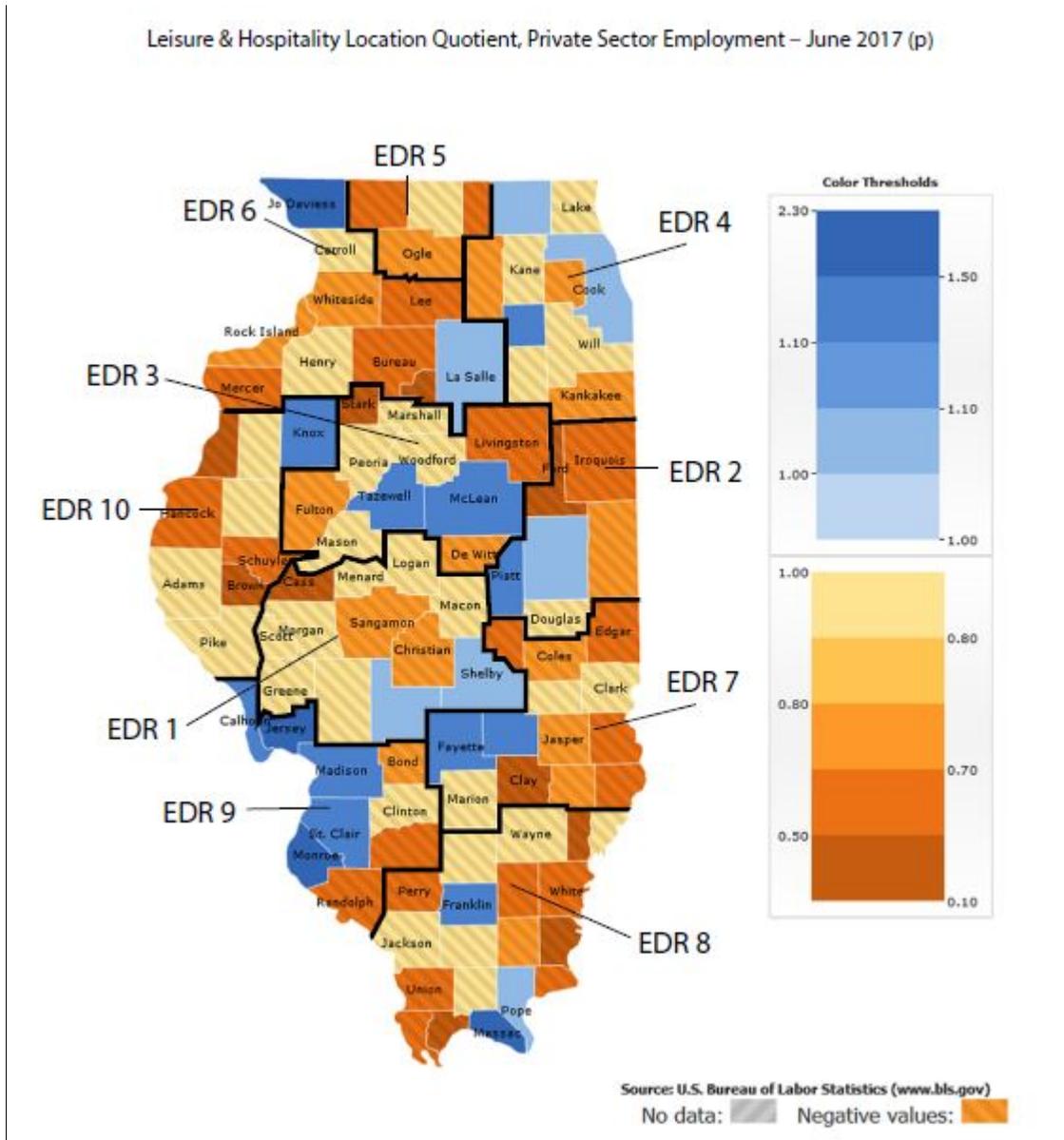
Education and Healthcare Services have higher location quotients in regions and counties with regional healthcare facilities or post-secondary educational institutions. While these maps display private sector employment, there may be private education-related employment in counties with large secondary schools or community colleges.

Map 2: Financial Activities Location Quotient, Private Sector Employment



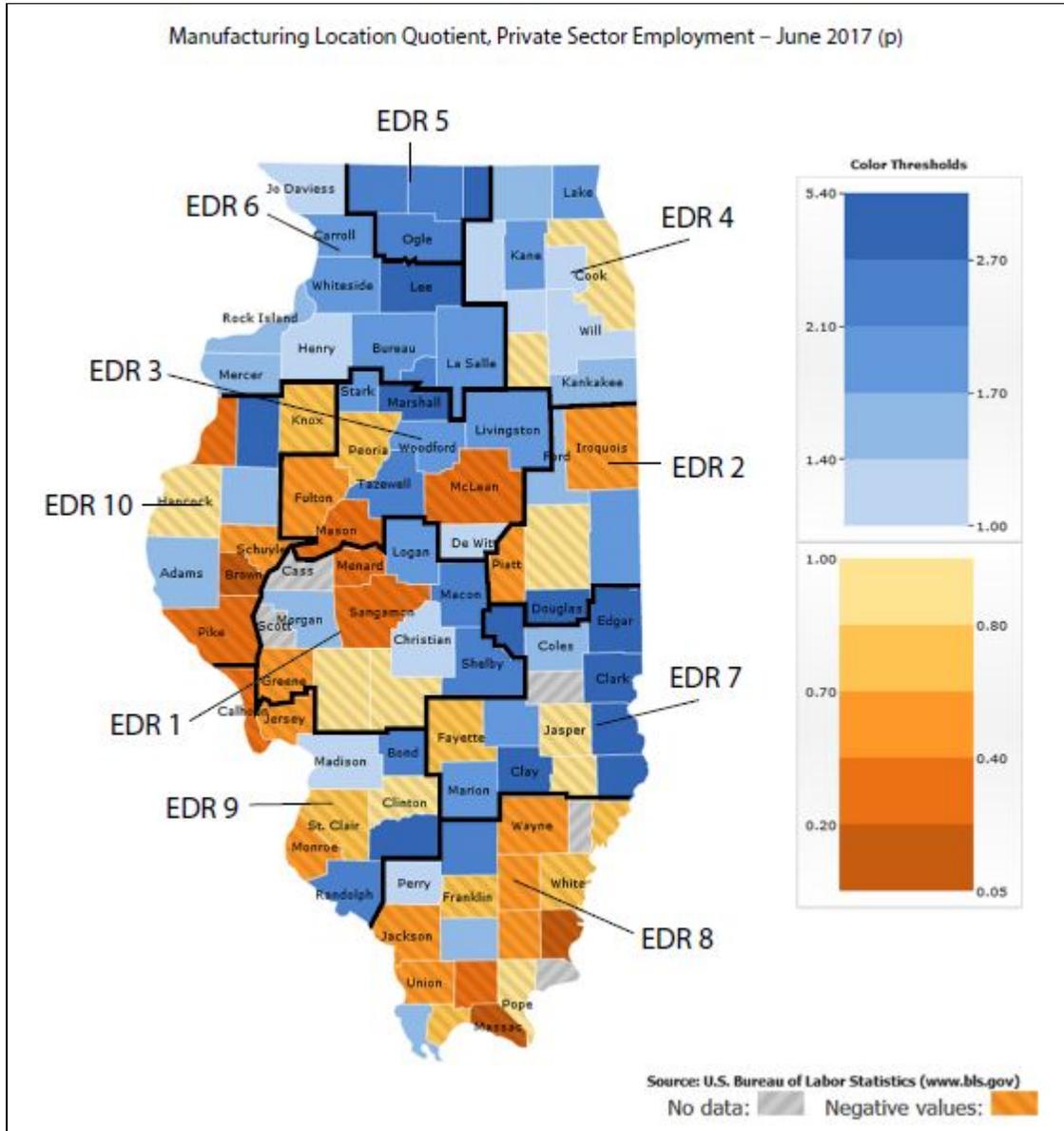
Map 2 clearly indicates there are scattered small pockets where financial services has a comparative advantage. No region is either completely above or below the 1.0 benchmark save one; EDR 6 has no county above the line. This indicates workforce development efforts intending to build on existing strengths must be targeted at specific sub-regions.

Map 3: Leisure and Hospitality Location Quotient, Private Sector Employment



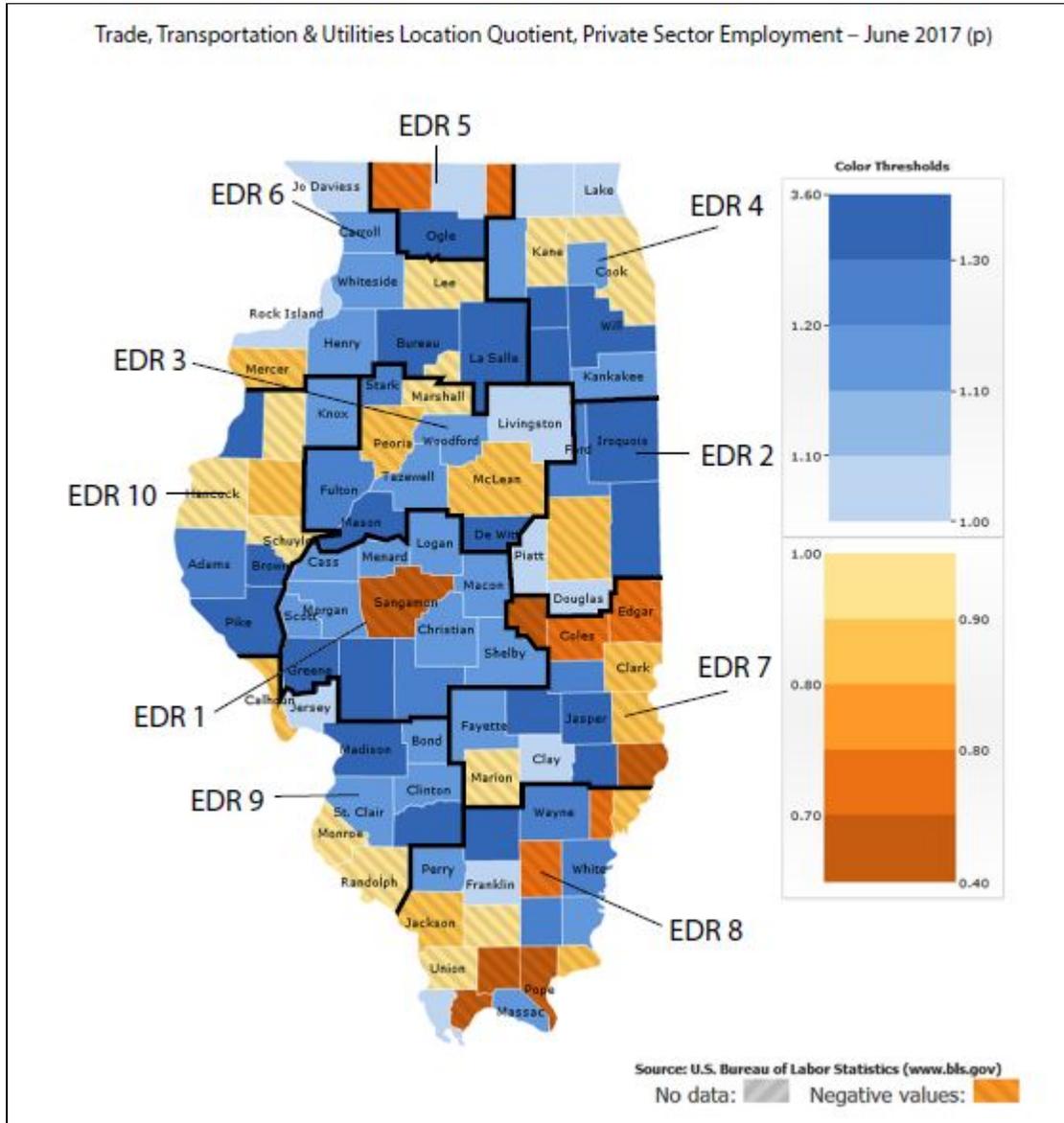
Leisure and hospitality location quotients indicate that despite the large numbers employed, the majority of counties are at a comparative disadvantage. This indicates workforce efforts intending to build on current positions of strength must be targeted to specific regions and counties.

Map 4: Manufacturing Location Quotient, Private Sector Employment



The manufacturing map effectively illustrates the demise of this sector has been vastly overstated. Note the number of regions and counties with a very strong manufacturing presence; indeed the entire northern third of the state has a location quotient above the 1.0 line. There are also two branches of counties extending deep into southern Illinois where manufacturing makes a very strong showing. This map reinforces the need for manufacturing-based efforts in all regions.

Map 5: Trade, Transportation and Utilities Location Quotient, Private Sector Employment



Similar to manufacturing, trade, transportation and utilities is a high location quotient sector in all regions. A very large number of counties have a comparative advantage upon which workforce efforts may build. Areas with location quotients above 1.0 are located on or near the major transportation hubs and arteries (airports, interstate highways, rail lines, rivers and inter-modal facilities) or have a power plant in the area. Note this sector is strong even in very rural areas of the state.

Table 3 shows projected employment demand through 2024 for major occupational sectors throughout Illinois. The largest numbers of new jobs are expected to be created within the transportation and material moving, sales, healthcare, food service, business and financial operations and computer and mathematical occupation sectors. Large numbers of job openings (including replacement jobs) are expected in sales, food service, and office and administrative occupations. Despite an expected overall decline in employment, significant numbers of annual production and job openings are still expected, due to replacements of existing workers that will leave the labor force.

**Table 3: 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 2014-2024	Net Employment Change 2014-2024	Average Annual Job Openings due to Growth	Average Annual Job Openings due to Replacements	Average Annual Job Openings due to Total
	2014	2014	2024	Number	Percent			
<b>TOTAL, ALL OCCUPATIONS</b>	<b>6,263,919</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>6,635,512</b>	<b>371,593</b>	<b>5.93%</b>	<b>42,732</b>	<b>147,453</b>	<b>190,185</b>
Management Occupations	483,634	7.72%	505,962	22,328	4.62%	2,392	10,833	13,225
Business & Financial Operations Occupations	317,015	5.06%	345,820	28,805	9.09%	2,962	6,259	9,221
Computer & Mathematical Occupations	171,846	2.74%	198,986	27,140	15.79%	2,885	2,599	5,484
Architecture & Engineering Occupations	89,186	1.42%	92,743	3,557	3.99%	412	2,196	2,608
Life, Physical & Social Science Occupations	33,709	0.54%	36,117	2,408	7.14%	242	921	1,163
Community & Social Services Occupations	102,873	1.64%	110,471	7,598	7.39%	760	2,254	3,014
Legal Occupations	54,324	0.87%	57,457	3,133	5.77%	325	913	1,238
Education, Training & Library Occupations	408,034	6.51%	418,051	10,017	2.45%	1,276	8,738	10,014
Arts/Design/Entertainment, Sports/Media Occs	95,526	1.53%	98,259	2,733	2.86%	332	2,410	2,742
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Occs	344,182	5.49%	378,413	34,231	9.95%	3,425	7,454	10,879
Healthcare Support Occupations	167,226	2.67%	191,973	24,747	14.80%	2,494	3,716	6,210
Protective Service Occupations	150,957	2.41%	154,920	3,963	2.63%	407	3,574	3,981
Food Preparation & Serving Occupations	471,596	7.53%	522,357	50,761	10.76%	5,328	17,249	22,577
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maint. Occs	227,921	3.64%	241,045	13,124	5.76%	1,313	4,604	5,917
Personal Care & Service Occupations	211,240	3.37%	230,991	19,751	9.35%	1,985	4,631	6,616
Sales & Related Occupations	651,369	10.40%	686,994	35,625	5.47%	3,628	19,201	22,829
Office & Administrative Support Occupations	926,052	14.78%	936,361	10,309	1.11%	3,605	19,327	22,932
Farming, Fishing & Forestry Occupations	18,343	0.29%	16,662	-1,681	-9.16%	9	467	476
Construction & Extraction Occupations	210,850	3.37%	229,537	18,687	8.86%	1,896	3,356	5,252
Installation, Maintenance & Repair Occs	204,707	3.27%	219,531	14,824	7.24%	1,561	4,734	6,295
Production Occupations	441,456	7.05%	440,156	-1,300	-0.29%	1,364	9,946	11,310
Transportation & Material Moving Occupations	481,873	7.69%	522,706	40,833	8.47%	4,130	12,072	16,202

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

**ii. Emerging Industry Sectors and Occupations**

Based on the information contained in Table 2, 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).

Similar to the discussion in the Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations, the IWIB will address the need for more current information from businesses to ensure the data being used to make decisions regionally and locally is the most current and reliable information available. Ensuring the availability of this information to all interested parties for future planning efforts will be a focus of the new Technology Standing Committee of the IWIB.

Tables 4, 5 and 6 display the results of categorizing (according to this methodology) the major industries from Table 3. Major industry categories that are not included in one of these categories are now dropped from the analysis.

**Table 4: LEADING Major Industry Sectors Statewide**

NAICS Title	Base Year Employment 2014	Share of Statewide Base Year Employment 2014	Projected Year Employment 2024	Net Change 2014-2024	Ten-Year Percent Change 2014-2024	Location Quotient 2014
<b>TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>6,263,919</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,635,512</b>	<b>371,593</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Professional and Business Services	915,447	14.6%	1,015,567	100,120	10.9%	1.04
Educational Services, Private and Public	566,444	9.0%	571,158	4,714	0.8%	1.01
Financial Activities	369,439	5.9%	388,402	18,963	5.1%	1.04
Wholesale Trade	299,930	4.8%	318,781	18,851	6.3%	1.12
Personal and Other Services	287,622	4.6%	301,969	14,347	5.0%	1.47
Transportation and Warehousing	277,994	4.4%	299,620	21,626	7.8%	1.14

Sources: IL Department of Employment Security Statewide Long-Term Employment Projections, IL Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

**Table 5: EMERGING Major Industry Sectors Statewide**

NAICS Title	Base Year Employment 2014	Share of Statewide Base Year Employment 2014	Projected Year Employment 2024	Net Change 2014-2024	Ten-Year Percent Change 2014-2024	Location Quotient 2014
<b>TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>6,263,919</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,635,512</b>	<b>371,593</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Health Care and Social Assistance	764,153	12.2%	858,843	94,690	12.4%	0.84
Retail Trade	604,463	9.6%	637,697	33,234	5.5%	0.86
Leisure and Hospitality	557,645	8.9%	616,483	58,838	10.6%	0.81
Self Employed, Unpaid Family Workers and Others n.e.c.	282,241	4.5%	283,299	1,058	0.4%	0.83
Construction	201,672	3.2%	226,721	25,049	12.4%	0.70
Information	99,093	1.6%	99,794	701	0.7%	0.75

Sources: IL Department of Employment Security Statewide Long-Term Employment Projections, IL Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

**Table 6: MATURING Major Industry Sectors Statewide**

NAICS Title	Base Year Employment 2014	Share of Statewide Base Year Employment 2014	Projected Year Employment 2024	Net Change 2014-2024	Ten-Year Percent Change 2014-2024	Location Quotient 2014
<b>TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>6,263,919</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,635,512</b>	<b>371,593</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Manufacturing	579,027	9.2%	562,281	(16,746)	-2.9%	1.03
Agricultural Production	73,358	1.2%	70,148	(3,210)	-4.4%	1.29

Sources: IL Department of Employment Security Statewide Long-Term Employment Projections, IL Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

For those major industries that are included, we can drill down the analysis to each of the industry sectors (3-digit NAICS-level industries) (North American Industry Classification System - <http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/>) found within these major industry categories. The tables found in Attachment B (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20B%20-%20Employment%20Projections.pdf>) display the leading, emerging and maturing industry sectors within the major industry categories identified in the first step.

The regional planning process utilizes the same analytic steps to assist regional teams to identify leading, emerging and maturing industry clusters within each region. The regional planning process includes the development of crosswalks between the detailed (3-digit) industry clusters and the occupational pathway for each region. The results of this 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. Table 7 below summarizes the leading, emerging and maturing sectors 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 7: Leading, Emerging and Maturing Sectors Identified by Economic Development Region**

Region	Leading Sectors	Emerging Sectors	Maturing Sectors	Comments
<b>Central</b>	Health Care Business Management	Marketing & Sales Hospitality & Tourism Law & Safety Education & Training TDL Construction Information Technology Research & Development	Finance Energy Agriculture Manufacturing	<b>Agriculture</b> remains significantly concentrated in this region, even as sector employment is expected to contract. <b>Health Care</b> is expected to continue to grow, as is <b>Marketing &amp; Sales</b> .
<b>East Central</b>	Marketing & Sales Hospitality & Tourism Education & Training TDL Manufacturing	Health Care Law & Safety Business Management Construction Information Technology Energy Research & Development Finance	Agriculture	<b>Education &amp; Training</b> employment is highly concentrated and growing (led by the University of Illinois). <b>Agriculture</b> is also highly concentrated in the region. <b>Manufacturing</b> employment is expected to grow slowly, but is still an important sector in the region.
<b>North Central</b>	Business Management Finance TDL Manufacturing	Hospitality & Tourism Marketing & Sales Health Care Law & Safety Education & Training Construction Information Technology Research & Development	Agriculture	<b>Manufacturing</b> employment is more highly concentrated in the region than in any other region of the state. Although employment growth is expected to be slow, overall employment in this sector will remain highly significant.
<b>Northeast</b>	Marketing & Sales Law & Safety Business Management TDL Information Technology	Hospitality & Tourism Health Care Construction Education & Training Finance Arts Research & Development Agriculture Energy	Manufacturing	<b>Business Management</b> is the most highly concentrated sector in this region. <b>Marketing &amp; Sales</b> and <b>Hospitality &amp; Tourism</b> are expected to be the largest job-creation sectors. <b>Information Technology</b> has a bigger footprint in this region than in any other region of the state.
<b>Northern Stateline</b>	Business Management TDL Manufacturing Agriculture	Marketing & Sales Hospitality & Tourism Law & Safety Health Care Construction Education & Training Finance Information Technology Research & Development Arts Energy	(None)	As in the North Central region, <b>Manufacturing</b> is extraordinarily important to this region in both job creation and (especially) employment concentration. <b>Transportation, Distribution &amp; Logistics</b> is also an important sector to this region across both of those metrics.
<b>Northwest</b>	TDL Business Management Manufacturing Finance Agriculture	Marketing & Sales Hospitality & Tourism Law & Safety Health Care Construction Education & Training Information Technology Research & Development	Energy	Between rail, river and trucking traffic, <b>Transportation, Distribution &amp; Logistics</b> is a major driver in this region, through both concentration and expected job growth. <b>Manufacturing</b> and <b>Agriculture</b> are also highly concentrated here and are expected to add some employment.
<b>Southeast</b>	Health Care Education & Training TDL	Marketing & Sales Hospitality & Tourism Business Management Law & Safety Construction Research & Development Information Technology	Agriculture Manufacturing	<b>Agriculture</b> and <b>Manufacturing</b> are the two most highly concentrated sectors in this region, but both are expected to contract in employment by 2022. Biggest job-creating sectors in this region are expected to be <b>Marketing &amp; Sales</b> and <b>Hospitality &amp; Tourism</b> . <b>Health Care</b> is also a significant, and growing, sector.
<b>Southern</b>	Marketing & Sales Hospitality & Tourism Health Care Education & Training Agriculture	Law & Safety Business Management TDL Construction Information Technology Research & Development Arts	Energy Manufacturing	<b>Hospitality &amp; Tourism</b> and <b>Education &amp; Training</b> are both highly concentrated in this region and are expected to create new jobs. <b>Agriculture</b> will create fewer jobs, but is still highly concentrated in the region.

<b>Southwest</b>	TDL Business Management Education & Training Manufacturing	Marketing & Sales Health Care Hospitality & Tourism Law & Safety Construction Information Technology Research & Development	Energy Agriculture	<b>Manufacturing</b> is expected to grow slowly, but is still tremendously concentrated and important to this region. <b>Transportation, Distribution &amp; Logistics</b> is also concentrated in this region and is expected to grow more robustly.
<b>West Central</b>	Health Care Business Management Education & Training TDL Manufacturing	Marketing & Sales Hospitality & Tourism Law & Safety Construction	Agriculture	<b>Health Care</b> is a significant sector in this region, and is expected to create the largest number of new jobs through 2022. <b>Manufacturing</b> and <b>Transportation, Distribution &amp; Logistics</b> are also significant in this region. <b>Agriculture</b> is the most highly concentrated sector in the region, but is expected to shrink in employment through 2022.

**iii. Employers’ Employment Needs**

An effective workforce system must address the basic need to ensure that a pool of appropriately skilled workers is available when and where businesses need them. The workforce and education systems must be aware and understand the key knowledge, skills and abilities required in the state and respective to each region.

*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 (USBLS) data to each of Illinois’ regional planning teams, who used this data as a key part of their assessment of business needs in their regional economies. Planning teams were encouraged to augment the USBLS data with their own primary data sources, such as business interviews and surveys, discussions with business industries and associations, and staffing agencies.

Regional plans highlighted the need to understand 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
- Understand the workforce impact of national, state and regional demographic trends
- Understand the effectiveness of regional talent pipelines
- Be aware of current and anticipated levels of demand for specific skills and how they are related to regional industries and occupations
- Understand the level of oversupply or undersupply of high-skilled, medium-skilled and low-skilled workers and the root causes of shortages and surpluses
- Ensure basic employability skills awareness and training are embedded into participants that need to improve those skills
- Work collaboratively to stay in touch with business needs through coordinated strategies that encourage companies to participate in developing talent pipeline solutions
- Be willing to share information that will improve companies’ access to skilled workers
- Understand how their policies and program delivery strategies impact overall efforts to improve regional talent pipelines
- Ensure that talent pipelines incorporate career pathways concepts

*Illinois Pathways*

In the past year, Illinois’ commitment to the needs of employers rapidly expanded beyond the post-secondary career and technical education system to include the P-20 system. The development of a college and career pathway system through Illinois Pathways is fully described under the “Partner Engagement with other Education and Training Providers” section of this plan. These strategic initiatives act to increase the knowledge, skills and abilities of Illinois citizens so that they may obtain the portable, stackable credentials and licenses that businesses require. Examples described within the Unified Plan include state-level legislative initiatives, such as the Illinois Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act, ESSA College and Career Readiness, and local level demonstrations such as the Illinois 60 by 25 Network and the Career Pathway Endorsement programs.

The Illinois Pathways website ([www.illinoispathways.com](http://www.illinoispathways.com)) is a resource that outlines education and career pathways leading to career options that require similar skills and preparation. The Illinois Pathways website allows users to research groupings of careers, labor market information, and the knowledge, skills, abilities and credentials that are required for each occupation. Illinois will build on this tool and update the information as a part of WIOA career pathway and sector strategies. Business engagement is critical to verify that this information accurately reflects employers’ needs.

Illinois Pathways is an innovative public-private education partnership that is organized to support local implementation of career pathway systems in STEM-related application areas by coordinating and reducing the transaction costs among statewide networks of education partners, businesses, industry associations, labor organizations and other organizations. Education and career pathways are an integrated collection of programs and services intended to develop students’ core academic, technical and employability skills, and to provide them with continuous education and training and to place them in high-demand, high-opportunity jobs. Illinois Pathways builds off of the National Career Clusters® Framework and supports career pathway systems in STEM application areas.

Built on longstanding strengths in Illinois, particularly in CTE Programs of Study, Illinois Pathways 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 occupations; and second, to spur state and regional economic development by developing a homegrown talent pipeline for areas of workforce need. Illinois Pathways provides specific information regarding the knowledge, skills and abilities that are required for each occupation in each industry sector. A sample occupational profile that was downloaded from [www.illinoispathways.com](http://www.illinoispathways.com) is outlined below. Illinois’ regional planning process directs the workforce, education and economic development partners to validate, refine and expand the occupational profile information with the help of businesses in the key industry sectors. This process will continue as the State of Illinois and the regions develop and implement their sector strategy initiatives.

***Example Occupational Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Profile from Illinois Pathways:  
Industrial Machinery Mechanics – At a Glance***

Industrial machinery mechanics install, maintain and repair factory equipment and other machinery.

*Wages:* Earn \$52,685 per year

*Ten Year Growth:* Much faster than average

*Annual Openings:* Very High

***Preparation***

An industrial machinery mechanic typically needs to:

- Have a high school diploma or equivalent, plus post-secondary training or apprenticeship.
- Complete a long-term, on-the-job training

***Working Conditions***

In a typical work setting, industrial machinery mechanics:

- Have a low to medium level of social interaction. They often have discussions with machine operators, but also work alone.

- Often work indoors.
- Must be exact in their work and be sure all details are done. Errors could result in injuries to machine operators.
- Work at least 40 hours per week. Schedules are generally established.

*Industrial Machinery Mechanics - Knowledge*

Industrial machinery mechanics need knowledge in the following areas:

- Mechanical: The design, use and repair of machines and tools
- Engineering and Technology: How to use computers and rules of engineering to design and produce goods and services
- Production and Processing: How products are made and distributed
- Mathematics: The rules and uses of numbers
- English Language: The meaning and use of the English language
- Computers and Electronics: Computer hardware and software
- Design: Making and using plans, blueprints, drawings and models
- Building and Construction: The tools and methods used to construct buildings, roads and other structures
- Public Safety and Security: How to protect people and property
- Publications and Manuals: Read and comprehend technical publications

*Industrial Machinery Mechanics - Skills and Abilities*

Industrial machinery mechanics need to:

Communicate

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

Reason and Problem Solve

- Follow guidelines to arrange objects or actions in a certain order.
- Notice when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong.
- Analyze ideas and use logic to determine their strengths and weaknesses.
- Recognize the nature of a problem.
- Judge the costs and benefits of a possible action.
- Combine several pieces of information and draw conclusions.
- Concentrate and not be distracted while performing a task.
- Use reasoning to discover answers to problems.
- Develop rules that group items in various ways.

Manage Oneself, People, Time and Things

- Check how well one is learning or doing something.
- Manage the time of self and others.

Work with People

- Change behavior in relation to others' actions.

Work with Things

- Maintain equipment on a routine basis. Determine when and what kind of maintenance is needed.
- Repair machines or systems.
- Watch gauges, dials and output to make sure a machine is working properly.
- Determine the causes of technical problems and find solutions for them.
- Inspect and evaluate the quality of products.
- Operate and control equipment.
- Determine the tools and equipment needed to do a job.
- Maintain equipment and systems
- Observe gauges, dials and output to make sure a machine or system is working properly

- Operate and control equipment and systems
- Perceive and Visualize
- Imagine how something will look if it is moved around or its parts are rearranged.

***Example Occupational Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Profile from Illinois Pathways: LPN Licensed Practical Nurses - At a Glance***

Licensed practical nurses (LPNs) care for people who are sick, injured or have disabilities.

*Wages:* Earn \$47,465 per year

*Ten Year Growth:* Average growth

*Annual Openings:* Very High

***Preparation***

A licensed practical nurse typically needs to:

- Have a high school diploma or equivalent.
- Complete a practical nursing program.
- Have a license.

***Working Conditions***

In a typical work setting, licensed practical nurses:

- Have a high level of social interaction with patients.
- Are often exposed to diseases or infections when interacting with patients.
- Must be very exact in their work. Errors could seriously endanger patients' health.
- May work part time or full time. Most work full time.

***Licensed Practical Nurses - Knowledge***

Licensed practical 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
- Mathematics: The rules and uses of numbers
- Education and Training: The methods of teaching and learning
- Administration and Management: How to run a business or group
- Chemistry: The properties of substances and the changes that occur when they interact
- Public Safety and Security: How to protect people and property
- Law, Government, and Jurisprudence: Laws, rules of the court and the politics
- Sociology and Anthropology: Where people come from and how they behave
- Clerical: General office work such as filling and storing information

***Licensed Practical Nurses - Skills and Abilities***

Licensed practical nurses need to:

**Communicate**

- Read and understand work-related materials.
- Understand spoken information.
- Understand written information.
- Listen to others and ask questions.
- Speak clearly so listeners can understand.
- Write clearly so other people can understand.

**Reason and Problem Solve**

- Notice when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong.
- Use reasoning to discover answers to problems.
- Analyze ideas and use logic to determine their strengths and weaknesses.
- Judge the costs and benefits of a possible action.
- Combine several pieces of information and draw conclusions.
- Understand new information or materials by studying and working with them.
- Follow guidelines to arrange objects or actions in a certain order.
- Recognize the nature of a problem.
- Concentrate and not be distracted while performing a task.
- Develop rules that group items in various ways.
- Think of new ideas about a topic.
- Make sense of information that seems without meaning or organization.

**Manage Oneself, People, Time and Things**

- Manage the time of self and others.
- Check how well one is learning or doing something.
- Go back and forth between two or more activities or sources of information without becoming confused.
- Motivate, develop and direct people as they work.

**Work with People**

- Look for ways to help people.
- Be aware of others' reactions and understand the possible causes.
- Change behavior in relation to others' actions.
- Teach others how to do something.
- Use several methods to learn or teach new things.
- Solve problems by bringing others together to discuss differences.
- Persuade others to approach things differently.

**Perceive and Visualize**

- Identify a pattern (a figure, object, word or sound) that is hidden in distracting material.

*Other Current Initiatives*

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

- Integrated Business Services Initiative – Beginning with a grant from the Department of Labor, Illinois developed a framework to provide a structured way for state and local WIOA partners to collaborate towards aligned and integrated business services across programs.
- Integrated Employment 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, which includes stackable and industry recognized credentials.
- 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.

**B. Workforce Analysis**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA.\* This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups\*\* in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes: Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals. \*\* Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

**i. Employment and Unemployment**

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

**ii. Labor Market Trends**

Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

**III. Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce**

Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

**IV. Skill Gaps**

Describe apparent 'skill gaps'.

**Workforce Analysis**

Illinois' labor force in the 25-54 age group continued to decline by more than 125,000 (-2.8%) between 2011 and 2016, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey estimates. This was the result of shrinking population within that age group. A much smaller decline occurred in the 16-19 year-old labor force, while the 20-24 year-old age group had a slight increase. During that same period, the labor force in the 55-64 age group increased by over 60,000 (+6.0%). As the overall population gets older, the available labor force in Illinois will likely continue to decline.

**i. Employment and Unemployment**

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. Overall, statewide unemployment rates dropped significantly between 2011 and 2016 from 9.7% to 5.9%. This accords with a stronger overall economy in 2016 relative to 2011.

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-%20Illinois%20Labor%20Force%20Employment%20and%20Unemployment.pdf>) provides additional demographic details regarding the Illinois labor force, employment and unemployment during this period.

**ii. Labor Market Trends**

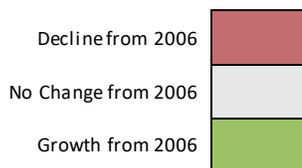
Between 2006 and 2016, employment shifts occurred among U.S. industry sectors, featuring a reduction in goods-producing industries in favor of service-producing industries. This shift continued a long-term trend, with manufacturing employment declining due to strong productivity gains in high value-added 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 & logging was the only sector to show marked improvement between 2006 and 2016 as oil production surged during the period due to the growth in “fracking” over this time frame. “Fracking” activity has since moderated, but employment in these industries remains strong relative to 2006. Construction employment decreased as a share of total employment in 2016 relative to 2006 when the housing bubble was nearing its peak.

As shown in Table 8, none of the Midwestern states show significant gains in their industry shares towards mining & logging. It is important to note, however, that mining & logging employment is small in all the Midwestern states. Kentucky’s employment activity in mining & logging as a share of total employment decreased relative to ten years ago. Missouri posted a very slight reduction in its share going to mining & logging. On the construction front where employment numbers are more meaningful as a share of total employment, Midwestern states were mixed. All states except Iowa saw a smaller share of employment in construction in 2016 than in 2006. In a few cases, states declined less rapidly than the U.S. (KY, MI, OH, WI, MN and IN). Illinois’ share of construction employment declined by the same magnitude as the nation. Missouri’s share of construction employment weakened slightly more than the national average.

In the Midwest, an important story is the manufacturing sector. Midwest manufacturing employment accounts for about one-third of national manufacturing employment. All the states in the Midwest (as well as the national average) recorded a drop in their share of manufacturing employment relative to total employment between 2006 and 2016. Iowa and Wisconsin saw the same percentage point reduction in their manufacturing employment shares as the nation. Missouri, Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio saw a greater reduction in their manufacturing shares than the nation, while Michigan, Kentucky, and Minnesota saw a smaller reduction in their manufacturing employment share in the ten years spanning 2006 to 2016.

<b>Table 8: 2016 Employment Distribution by Industry as a Share of Total NonFarm Payrolls</b>										
	US	IL	IN	IA	KY	MI	MN	MO	OH	WI
Mining & Logging	0.5%	<b>0.1%</b>	0.2%	0.1%	0.6%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
Construction	4.7%	<b>3.6%</b>	4.2%	5.1%	4.0%	3.6%	4.0%	4.2%	3.8%	3.8%
Manufacturing	8.6%	<b>9.5%</b>	17.0%	13.6%	13.0%	13.9%	11.0%	9.2%	12.5%	15.9%
Trade/Transportation/Utilities										
Wholesale Trade	4.1%	<b>5.0%</b>	3.8%	4.3%	4.0%	4.0%	4.6%	4.2%	4.3%	4.2%
Retail Trade	11.0%	<b>10.3%</b>	10.8%	11.6%	11.2%	10.9%	10.3%	11.1%	10.5%	10.6%
Trans, Warehousing & Utilities	3.5%	<b>4.8%</b>	4.7%	4.2%	5.6%	3.2%	3.5%	3.8%	3.9%	3.7%
Information	1.9%	<b>1.6%</b>	1.1%	1.4%	1.2%	1.3%	1.7%	1.9%	1.3%	1.7%
Financial Activities	5.7%	<b>6.4%</b>	4.3%	6.9%	4.9%	4.9%	6.1%	5.9%	5.5%	5.2%
Professional & Business Services	14.0%	<b>15.5%</b>	10.9%	8.8%	11.4%	15.0%	12.9%	13.3%	13.2%	11.0%
Educational & Health Services	15.7%	<b>15.2%</b>	15.0%	14.6%	14.1%	15.4%	18.0%	16.1%	16.8%	15.2%
Leisure & Hospitality	10.8%	<b>9.9%</b>	10.0%	9.1%	10.1%	9.9%	9.1%	10.6%	10.1%	9.4%
Other Services	3.9%	<b>4.2%</b>	4.1%	3.8%	3.4%	3.9%	4.0%	4.1%	3.9%	5.1%
Government	15.4%	<b>13.8%</b>	13.9%	16.4%	16.6%	13.9%	14.7%	15.3%	14.2%	14.1%



Manufacturing employment declined in the Midwest, as well as, in the nation, due to continuing long-term trends of improved productivity combined with offshoring to low-cost economies. However, it is important to note that demand for manufacturing employment remains strong in the Midwest and the nation because of the need to replace retiring workers. As “Baby Boomers” retire in Illinois, employers in the Midwest and across the nation will need to replace these workers. Occupations associated with manufacturing industries remain in demand locally (in the state) and in the region as well. Manufacturing’s share of total employment is highest in Indiana and Wisconsin followed by Michigan, Iowa, Kentucky and Ohio. In the Midwest, Illinois and Missouri have a lower share of manufacturing employment than their neighboring states, but still higher than the national share. Some of the skills, knowledge and abilities required for those entering manufacturing production occupations in 2018 and beyond will differ from those who began their jobs 30 years ago with a greater reliance on technological skills.

While manufacturing remains a key industry in all Midwestern states, Illinois’ share is smaller than its neighbors (except for Missouri); in fact, Illinois’ share of manufacturing employment is more closely aligned to the national average. But Illinois is the largest state in the Midwest and consequently, its actual level of manufacturing employment is larger than all the other states in the region except Michigan and Ohio, which have benefited

from the strong recovery in the motor vehicle sector within the broader recovery of the past eight years. Demand for manufacturing occupations remains healthy in Illinois, and we will continue to compete with our neighbors for skilled labor.

Among trade, transportation and utilities, all Midwestern states saw a reduction in the share of employment in the wholesale trade sector except for Michigan and Wisconsin, which posted no change in 2016 in this sector relative to 2006. Midwestern states generally followed the same trend as the nation. In the retail trade sector, a majority of states also saw a reduction in their employment shares that was similar to the nation, although Michigan, Minnesota and Ohio posted a larger drop in their retail trade shares relative to the nation and their neighboring states. The nation recorded a drop in its share of employment in the transportation, warehousing and utilities sectors relative to 2006, but a majority of Midwestern states saw an increase in their share of employment in this sector, with the exception of Wisconsin (which posted a drop) and Missouri (unchanged). Kentucky, Illinois and Indiana have somewhat larger shares of their employment in this industry sector than the nation and their neighboring states. Illinois has long been known as a transportation hub due to its geographic location in the middle of the country, however both Indiana and Kentucky enjoy similar locational advantages.

Motor carrier businesses in Illinois are experiencing the impact of a national shortage of licensed truck drivers. Since 1994, the national average truck driver age has increased dramatically. An IWIB Transportation / Distribution / Logistics (TDL) Task Force Report issued in September 2017 identified several factors contributing to the shortage in addition to the aging of the workforce. For example, the number of new commercial driver's licenses issued in Illinois is on a downward trend, as is the number of license renewals. The number of trainees has remained relatively steady since 2014, but at a level 15 percent below 2013. The truck driver shortage impacts businesses in all regions of the state, however the preponderance of carriers is located in the Northeast, Northern Stateline and Southwest regions. The TDL Task Force Report is included as Attachment K (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20K%20-%20Transportation%20Distribution%20and%20Logistics%20Task%20Force%20Final%20Report.pdf>).

Professional and business services grew across the region, although all states except Illinois and Michigan have a smaller share of their employment in this industry sector than is the case nationally. In contrast, Illinois' share of employment in professional and business services is larger than the national average and higher than any of its neighboring states. Iowa and Minnesota saw a smaller increase than the nation during the ten years spanning 2006 to 2016, while Ohio rose at the same pace as the nation. Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri and Wisconsin all grew faster than the nation.

Professional services include: accounting, legal, architecture and engineering, computer design and management consulting, as well as business headquarters. Business services include: temporary help agencies (with a wide variety of occupational needs), waste management services, business support services, and investigation and security services. Professional services tend to have a larger number of occupations with high wages, though business services can vary in wage structure.

Educational and health services recorded an increased share of overall employment in the nation and among Midwest states. This sector exhibited the fastest growth of any industry sector. The largest gain in employment share came in Minnesota, followed by Ohio, Illinois and Missouri. Other states saw somewhat smaller increases over this 10-year period with Kentucky posting the smallest growth relative to its neighbors. Occupations related to health care and education industries will be in demand across the region as Midwestern states are likely to compete for workers in these occupational fields.

The leisure and hospitality sector saw increases across the board between 2006 and 2016 in the nation and among the Midwestern states. The nation posted an increase of 1.2 percentage points in its share of employment in this industry sector and this gain was matched by Illinois. All other Midwestern states posted smaller gains in their employment shares in this industry. Generally, Midwestern states have a smaller share of employment than the nation in this industry sector, but Missouri most closely approximates the nation.

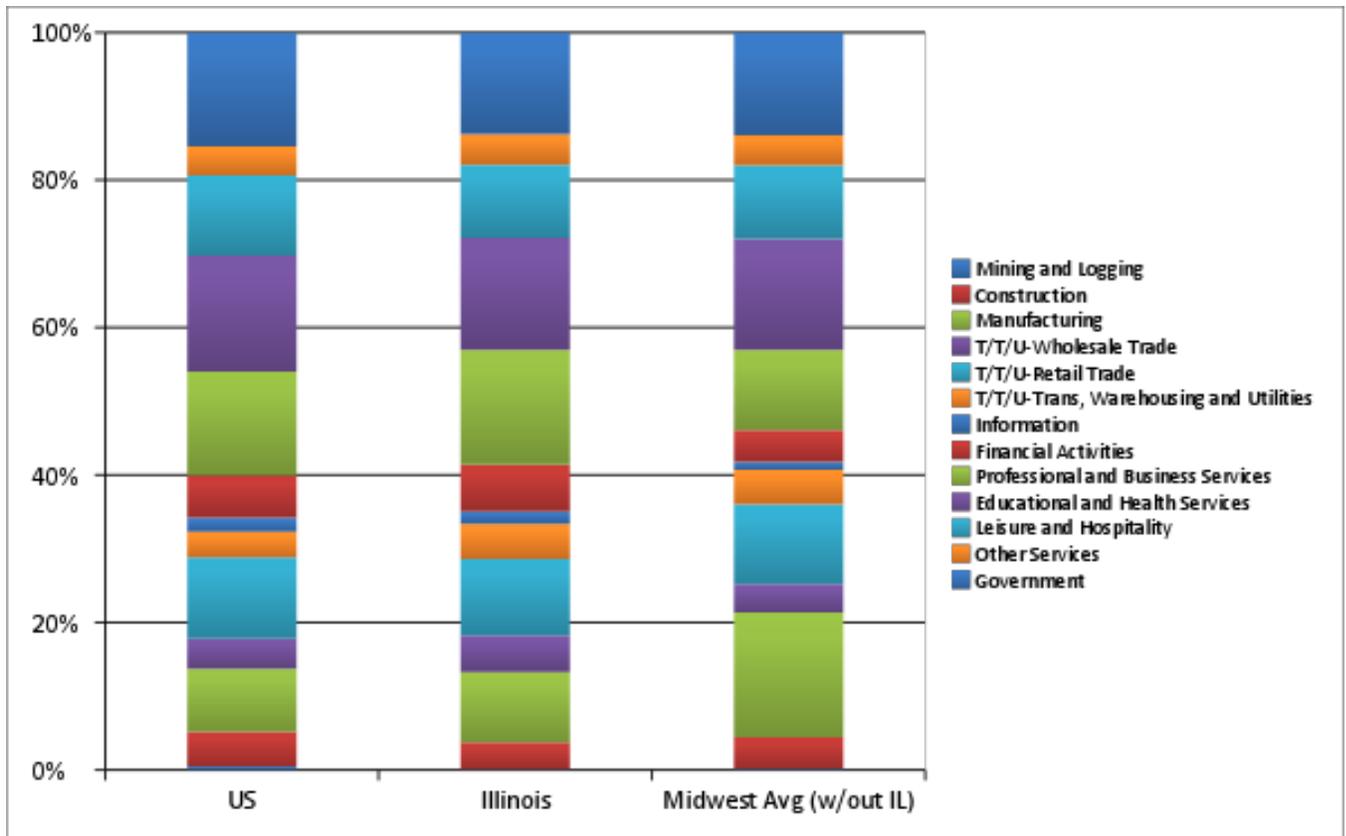
The information sector saw a reduced share of employment in all Midwestern states and the national average. The largest drop, by far, came in Iowa. The rest of the states saw much smaller declines. Financial activities also

saw a smaller share of employment in all Midwestern states (except Iowa and Kentucky where the share of employment in financial activities increased). Illinois' share decreased more than the nation and more than its neighbors. Illinois generally held strong employment in the financial activities sector and we remain one of the states with the largest share in this industry. This sector includes both high and middle-wage jobs and generally requires occupations with high levels of skill and education.

The government sector includes a variety of high, medium and low-skilled occupations. The nation, as well as a majority of Midwestern states saw a drop in their employment share in the government sector. Michigan posted the largest decline over the 10 years spanning 2006 to 2016, declining about twice as much as the nation. Illinois and the remaining states decreased much less. Illinois' share of government sector employment is smaller than the nation and smaller than all other Midwest states.

Chart 1, based on Table 8, provides a graphic representation of this analysis.

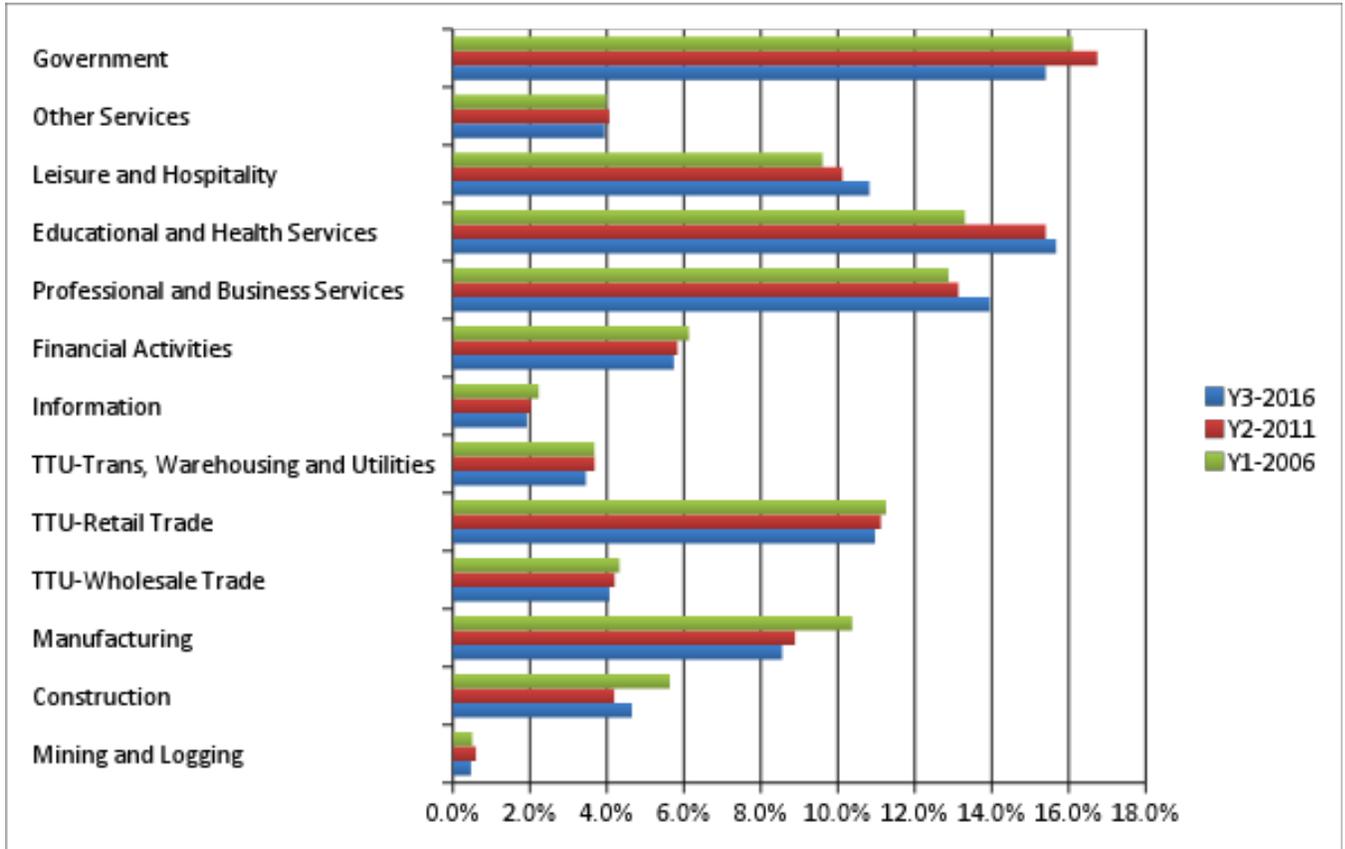
**Chart 1 – 2016 Distribution of Industry IL vs. U.S. and Average of Other Midwest States**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program 2016

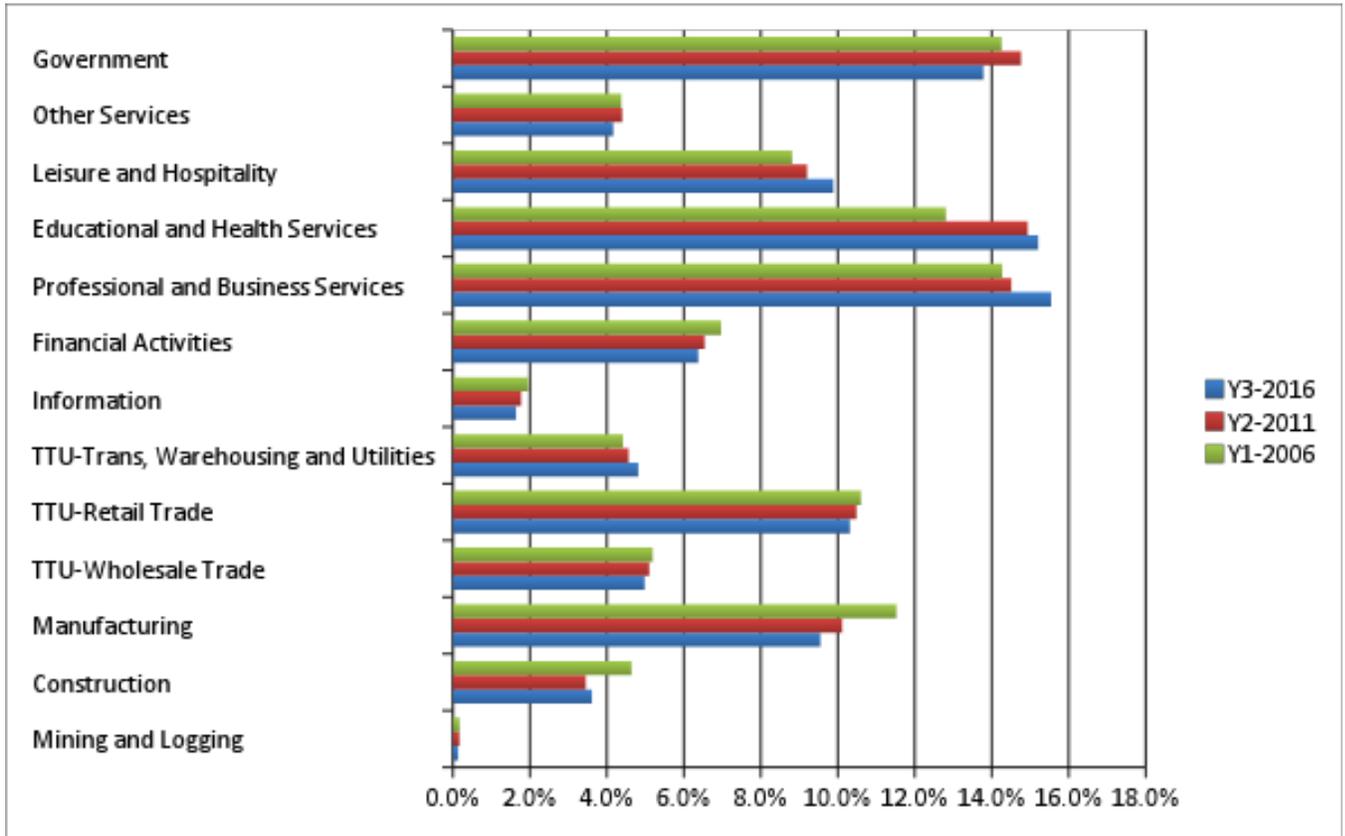
Charts 2-4 show how the industry distribution has changed over the last decade, with data shown for 2006, 2011 and 2016.

**Chart 2 U.S. Employment Distribution by Industry as Share of Total Nonfarm Payrolls 2006, 2011, 2016**



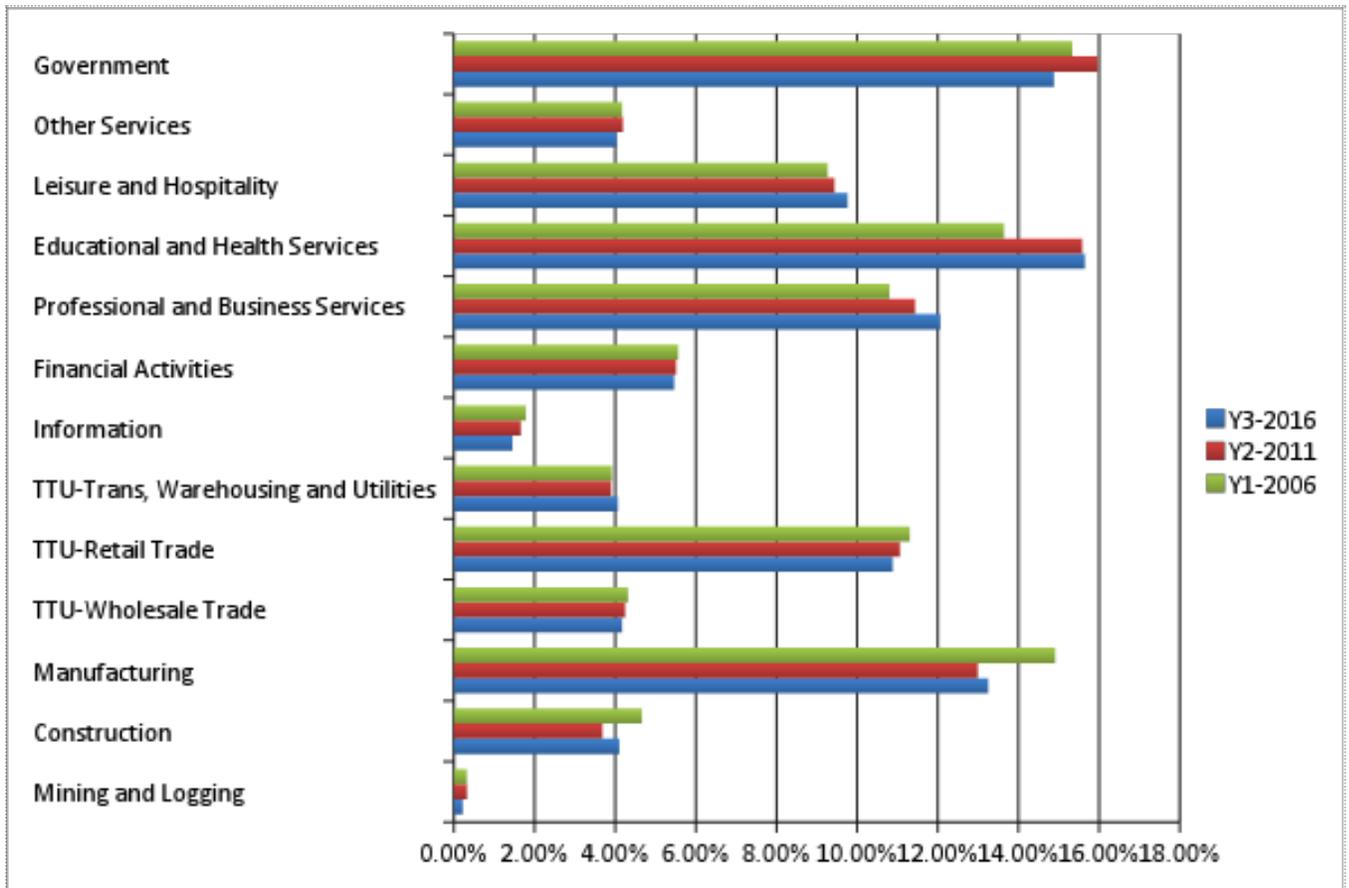
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program 2006, 2011, 2016

**Chart 3 – IL Employment Distribution by Industry as Share of Total Nonfarm Payrolls 2006, 2011, 2016**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program 2006, 2011, 2016

**Chart 4 – MW (outside of IL) Employment Distribution by Industry as Share of Total Nonfarm Payrolls  
2006, 2011, 2016**

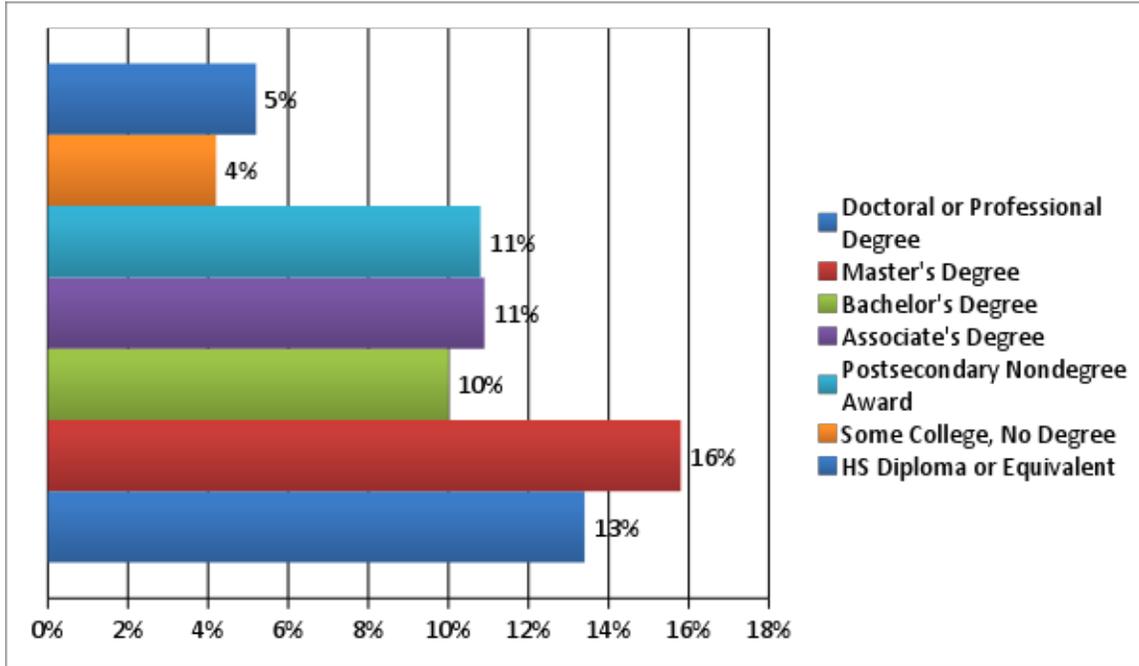


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics Program 2006, 2011, 2016

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

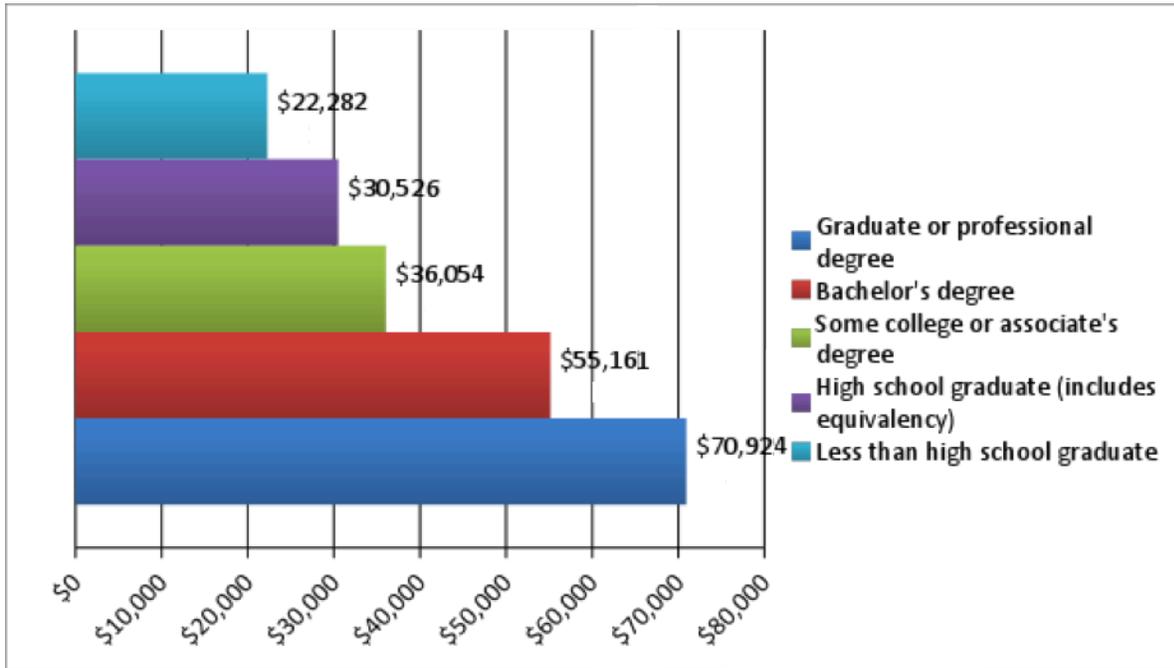
Chart 5 – Projected U.S. Employment Growth by Educational Requirements: 2016-26



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

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 2016 American Community Survey.

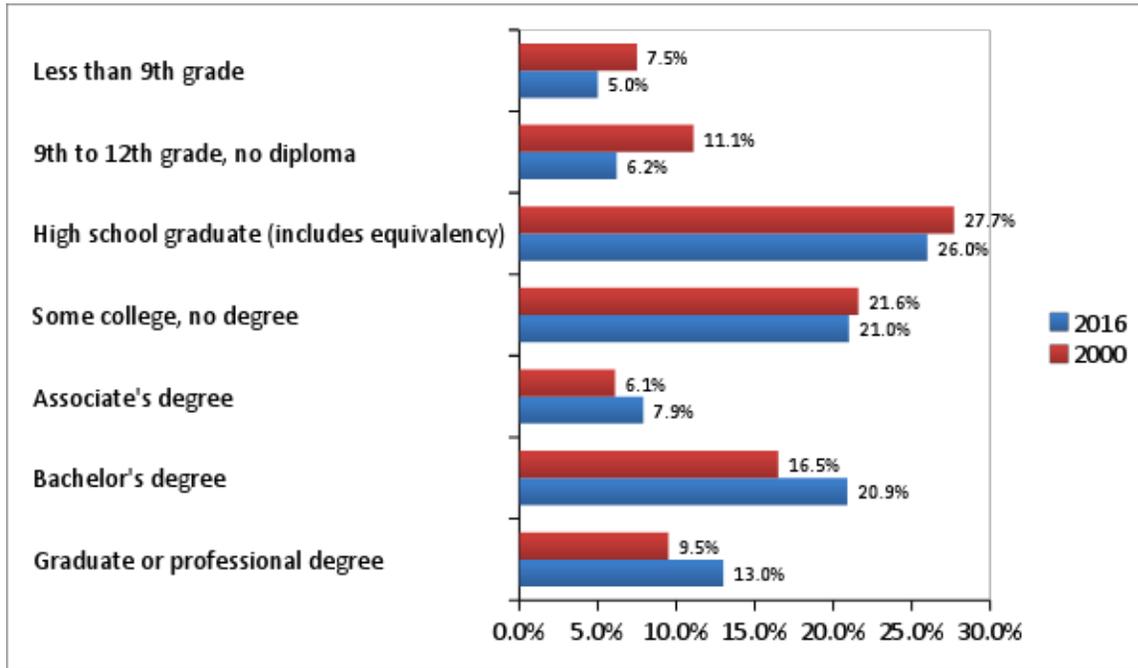
Chart 6 – Illinois Median Income by Educational Attainment: 2016



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2016

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.

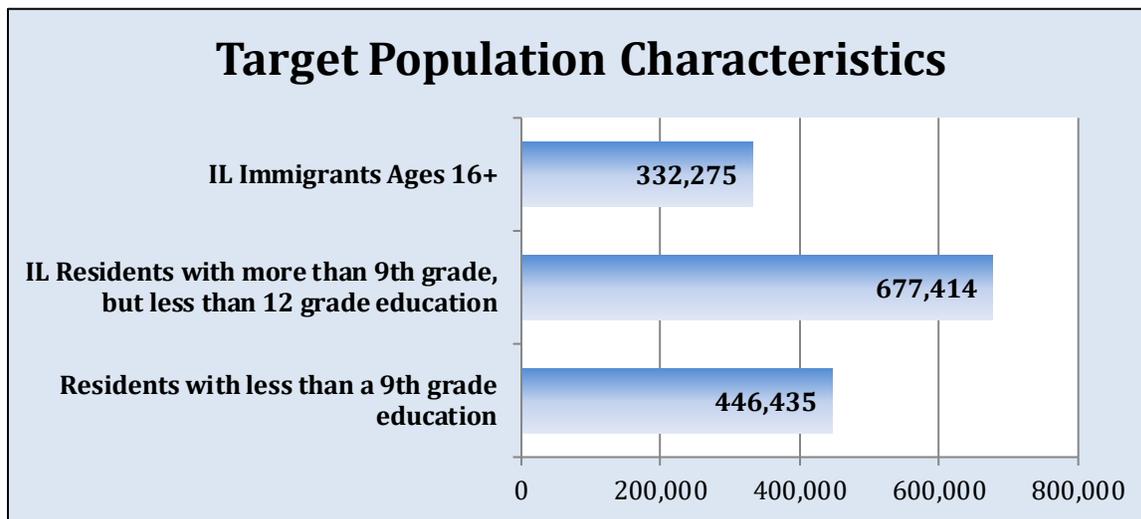
**Chart 7 – Percent of Illinois Population by Educational Attainment: 2000 to 2016**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, American Community Survey 2016

The percentage of Illinois’ population (age 25+) with some type of post-secondary degree increased from 32% in 2000 to almost 42% in 2016. 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 this data shows, 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 – Target Population Characteristics**



Source: 2017 Illinois Community College Board Index of Need Report

In Illinois, nearly 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.

**iv. Skill Gaps**

During recent years, a number of projects and studies have examined the issue of “skill gaps” within major industry sectors in Illinois (or significant portions of Illinois). For example, in 2017, the Illinois Community College Board developed the Workforce Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The WESP focused on skill gaps, specifically under Strategic Goal 2: “Address Essential and Occupational Skill Gaps.” This Strategic Goal is focused on embedding essential employability skills into curricula, addressing employers’ concerns regarding on the job competencies and providing best-practices resources to Community Colleges.

The IWIB is also supportive of these activities and has placed continued emphasis on identifying skills gaps. Its strategic plan focuses on developing business profiles throughout the state to understand specific workforce needs that are directly identified by employers.

The following subheadings highlight three important industry sectors in Illinois -- manufacturing, healthcare and transportation, distribution & logistics (TDL) -- and provide a brief synopsis of the findings of skill gaps projects and studies.

*Manufacturing*

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency on Planning (CMAP) released a policy update in March, 2015 that examined quantitative labor market data to determine the extent of the manufacturing skills gap in metropolitan Chicago.

As of 2014, Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI) estimated that 28,000 unemployed individuals in the Chicago region were seeking work in the manufacturing sector. Despite this large pool of job seekers, manufacturing companies claim they are having trouble finding skilled workers to fill open positions, both in the region and nationwide. Data indicate that there may be shortages of industrial machinery mechanics, computer numerical control (CNC) machine operators and programmers and welders in the region.

The skills gap is a complex issue with few direct measures. Data about wages, job openings and work weeks must be woven together to understand the full conditions in the labor market. Even with all three measures, it can still be difficult to determine whether individual occupations face a shortage of skilled workers. Within the Chicago region, skills gaps are evident in several key manufacturing jobs, such as industrial machinery mechanics, computer numerical control (CNC) programmers and operators and welders. The severity of this recent manufacturing skills gap may have intensified when demand for workers spiked as the economy began to recover in 2009.

While much of the manufacturing skills gaps dialogue has focused on technical skills, the challenge of finding employees may extend beyond technical competencies. Manufacturing employees also must have so-called "essential/soft skills" such as literacy, numeracy, reliability, problem-solving and the ability to work in teams. The "CMAP Manufacturing Drill-Down Report" indicates that firms throughout the region have reported being unable to find sufficient workers with these skills. Downstate manufacturers and those in more rural areas face similar and often greater challenges in filling their vacancies due to an aging workforce, outmigration of younger residents and smaller labor pools.

#### *Health Care*

In September 2014, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) accepted a [report](#) developed by its Health Care Task Force, consisting of IWIB business leaders and health care educators and practitioners. This report examined the workforce implications of issues regarding the implementation of new public health and coordinated, community-based healthcare delivery models in Illinois. These new models are being implemented in response to changing population and patient needs, federal and state healthcare reforms, and innovations in delivery models, professional practices and technology. These new models place stronger emphasis on prevention and primary care and use professional and paraprofessional healthcare workers in new roles with different skill requirements.

The Task Force determined that the shift to team-based delivery models and improved health information technologies will allow each primary care physician to efficiently and effectively manage a greater number of patients. Insofar as workforce staffing is concerned, the results of these changes will be the following associated shifts in demand:

- A reduction in growth rate for primary care physicians. While the demand for primary care services will grow chiefly because of policy and incentive (and demographic) changes, the provision of those services will be shared across all team members, not exclusively by primary care physicians.
- An increased demand for advanced practice nurses (APNs) and physician assistants (PAs).
- A significantly increased demand for front-line occupations such as community health workers (CHWs), home health aides (HHAs) and medical assistants (MAs).

In each of these occupational categories, apparent skills gaps can be identified. The gaps range from the need for increased managerial skills on the part of primary care physicians to the up-skilling of APNs and PAs to meet more robust patient care responsibilities and to meet the need for new and updated certification protocols for CHWs, HHAs and MAs. Recently released long-term occupational projections support these shifts in health care employment.

**Table 9: High Demand Healthcare Occupations**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Employment 2014</b>	<b>Employment Change (2014-2024)</b>	<b>Average Annual Job Openings</b>
Registered Nurses	116,375	10.49%	3,967
Physical Therapists	10,978	20.23%	516
Nurse Practitioners	6,360	24.54%	306
Physical Therapist Assistants	3,755	22.29%	193
Physical Therapist Aides	3,405	21.12%	170
Physician Assistants	2,831	21.51%	125
Nurse Anesthetists	1,857	17.18%	76
Nurse Midwives	442	17.19%	18

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security – Illinois 2014-2024 Occupational Projections

*Transportation, Distribution & Logistics*

Industry economists predict a national shortage of some 240,000 commercial truck drivers by 2023. Despite large numbers of individuals entering commercial driver’s license training in Illinois each year, the number of new licenses issued annually is a mere fraction (approximately 6%) of the number entering training. In this sector, retention is as significant a challenge as talent pipeline management. Since 2009, truck driver turnover rates have been recorded at nearly five times the average rate of other industries. These statistics led the IWIB to reconstitute the TDL Task Force in 2015. The Task Force was charged with developing recommendations and strategies for developing the needed TDL workforce in all areas of Illinois. The Task Force submitted its final report in June 2017. This report (Attachment K) (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20K%20-%20Transportation%20Distribution%20and%20Logistics%20Task%20Force%20Final%20Report.pdf>) summarizes the latest supply and demand projections, model solutions and promising practices that could assist Illinois in addressing its labor force needs within the industry – particularly with regard to over-the-road drivers. The ultimate goal of the Task Force’s work was to increase the number of CDLs in Illinois, support industry cluster growth and drive overall economic growth in Illinois. Working in four sub-groups, the task force members identified short-and long-term action goals resulting in nine recommendations to the IWIB for approval and to the industry for consideration. A small group of Task Force members will remain to review the results of these recommendations.

Additionally, in June 2015, JP Morgan Chase and Jobs for the Future released a report called “[Growing Skills for a Growing Chicago](#),” which sought to develop “data-driven solutions to address the mismatch between employer needs and the skills of current job seekers.” In terms of TDL, the report found that there is a strong and ongoing demand for what it terms “middle-skill” jobs – jobs that require more than a high school credential, but less than a bachelor’s degree. Examples of these occupations are diesel mechanic or supply chain specialist. The Chicago metro area creates more than 5,000 of these middle-skill jobs in TDL each year, but the need for an associate’s degree or credentialing is often the source of the skill gap. To close that gap, the report outlines a series of recommendations, including the widespread institution of TDL-specific talent pipeline solutions that will increase the feedback loop between employers and training providers.

**2. Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in *Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce* above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in *Employers' Employment Needs* above. This must include an analysis of –

**A. The State's Workforce Development Activities**

Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop delivery system partners.\*

\* Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

**2. Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis**

**A. The State's Workforce Development Activities**

The Illinois Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified State Plan is designed to provide a vision of the Governor's integration of workforce, education and economic development policy while also serving 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 authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006
- 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 distributing 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. Currently there are 81 providers of adult education and family literacy in Illinois, consisting of community colleges, community-based organizations, regional offices of education and other approved providers. The mission and vision of adult education is to provide every individual in Illinois with access to adult education and literacy services, in preparation for enrollment in postsecondary education and training programs as well as employment. In Illinois, more than 1.1 million adults have less than 12 grades of formal education, approximately 2.8 million residents speak a language other than English in their home, and more than 552,000 immigrants reside here. ICCB seeks to prepare adult learners to compete for jobs of the present and the future. To accomplish this, it is necessary to build a system that is founded on education, training and workforce.

The ICCB also administers Postsecondary Perkins funds. During FY '16 and '17, roughly two-thirds (65.3%) of all Illinois community college graduates earned a CTE degree or certificate and 259 new CTE programs were approved to meet workforce demands. In Illinois, federal Perkins Title I funds are divided 60/40 between the secondary and post-secondary 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 post-secondary CTE programs.

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) is the most important piece of legislation affecting career and technical education (CTE) in Illinois. Perkins IV focuses state and local efforts on the continuous improvement of programs that facilitate the academic achievement of CTE students. This is accomplished by strengthening the connections between secondary and post-secondary education, by restructuring the way stakeholders, high schools, community colleges, universities, business and parents work together and by increasing state and local accountability standards. The intent of Illinois' post-secondary 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 <http://www.dol.gov/VETS/E8-30166.pdf>.

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 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 child care. 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 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*

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 which 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: <http://www.jobcorps.gov/centers/il.aspx>.

**State Workforce Development Activities**

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 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 their potential for successful and rewarding careers. 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 to achieve outcomes similar to other populations (see Section on “Targeted Populations”).
- Creating new pathways for success by preparing low-skill 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.
- 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.

### **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*

This group of top program administrators began meeting in May 2015 and continue 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 this group 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 regarding policies to guide 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%20K%20-%20Transportation%20Distribution%20and%20Logistics%20Task%20Force%20Final%20Report.pdf>);
- Jointly developing a strategy 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 mechanics associated with local and state infrastructure cost funding mechanisms under WIOA;
- Identifying initial elements to be included in the [Governor’s Guidelines](https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20J%20-%20Governors%20Guidelines.pdf) (Attachment J) (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20J%20-%20Governors%20Guidelines.pdf>) which provide direction and support regarding negotiations of program partners at the state and local levels. The Governor’s Guidelines have since been revised twice, with the latest revision issued in December 2016. Supplemental guidance to the Governor’s Guidelines was issued to guide MOU and annual budget negotiations specific to Program Year 2017 (State Fiscal Year 2018). A third revision for Program Year 2018 (State Fiscal Year 2019) is awaiting approval, and updates will be issued going forward as needed.
- Working as part of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) Policy Workgroup on One-Stop Certification to provide input regarding the criteria and processes to be used for certification of Comprehensive One-Stop Centers;
- Development of a budget reconciliation handbook as a resource for local areas to understand and carry out the MOU budget reconciliation process. A webinar-based training was also held for individuals in local areas;
- In April 2017, a member of the Interagency Work Group shared the principles of the Illinois MOU development process with a national audience on a Workforce GPS WIOA Webinar.
- During the 2015-2016 regional and local planning cycle, the Interagency Work Group experimented with creating regional technical assistance teams made up of core partner field staff. The intent was to create teams of “WIOA experts” closer to the front lines that could respond very quickly to resolve implementation issues. In 2017 the Interagency Work Group conducted an evaluation and determined that these teams had varied levels of success. Therefore, the Interagency Work Group modified the process and implemented a new procedure for obtaining local input on WIOA implementation issues.

Required program partner “troubleshooters” were put into place to monitor and identify the need for technical assistance statewide. The Interagency Work Group identified the characteristics of what qualified as a “local implementation issue.” A form was put into place for “troubleshooters” to complete, which elevates the implementation issue to the Interagency Work Group for consideration, review and response to the local area.

#### *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 has 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.

#### *Workforce Education Strategic Planning*

The ICCB worked with state and local partners in the development of a statewide Workforce Education Strategic Plan (WESP). 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 the implementation of strategies at the community college level continues. At the fall 2017 Illinois WIOA Summit, the lead agencies for both the WESP and the State Unified Plan shared with the audience how the plans align.

The information gathered through these education planning meetings was used to inform WIOA state and regional planning efforts that 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

#### **Technical Assistance and Professional Development**

Illinois continues to coordinate technical assistance and professional development activities to support the priorities outlined in this plan. As a part of the initial WIOA implementation activities, Illinois hosted a series of regional planning kick-off meetings in December 2015. Partner program staff from each economic development region came together to learn about each other’s programs, to review regional demographic and program data and to learn to use a data-driven planning approach. Using a format developed by the state, they also began to work on a planning framework specific to their region. Approximately 500 individuals attended

these events and had the opportunity to ask questions and determine how their programs could contribute to the overall success of the region.

*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

*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.

*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 and Training Roundtables*

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 and incumbent worker training. To prepare for the WIOA requirements, the state coordinated a number of roundtable events highlighting the importance of work-based learning, with a specific emphasis on using these training strategies to support industry sector initiatives. Additional technical assistance will provide the opportunity to institutionalize best practices and expand the impact of WBL employers, job seekers and the workforce system. Online resources, such as assessments and planning tools were made available on Illinois workNet. This information will be updated in 2018 to include best practices from the National Governor’s Association Work-Based Learning Policy Academy.

**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. Representatives from one of these regional partnerships shared the successes and lessons learned from their experience with their peers at the WIOA State Summit held in October 2017. Commerce staff continue to speak to business groups, most recently the Illinois Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives, to encourage business leaders to work together to jointly address their workforce needs. Staff from the Departments of Commerce and Employment Security 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.

*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. The Illinois Pathways initiative develops the National Career Clusters® Framework and supports career pathway systems in STEM application areas. 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.

#### *Pathways to Results (PTR) Initiative*

Pathways to Results (PTR) is aimed at improving student transitions to and through postsecondary education and into employment. It empowers organizations to use methods, templates and tools to continuously improve pathways and programs of study by addressing inequities in student outcomes. In Perkins IV, effective partnerships are viewed as essential to help all students meet college and career readiness expectations. Within the context of PTR, community colleges must fully and completely engage both internal and external stakeholders in their career pathways work. To do this, colleges are encouraged to develop partnerships based upon sound principles—setting goals and outcomes, defining the structure of governance, identifying a strategy for operation, evaluating success and considering sustainability. Stakeholders representing all sectors of industry and education should be at the table under the PTR model. PTR is an excellent model to utilize for the purpose of leveraging resources in order to provide enhanced access to workforce development programs at the states’ community colleges and across post-secondary CTE programs.

#### *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 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 program has developed an IET initiative to provide adult education students with the opportunity to earn industry recognized credentials, college certificates and college credit while studying to obtain the 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.

#### *Disability Employment Initiative (DEI)*

The Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services has worked effectively with Commerce around its Disability Employment Initiative projects throughout the state. 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 the 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 usable 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 will be shared with partner programs, the IWIB and LWIBs following an evaluation of participant outcomes at the end of the grant in 2018.

**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 portion of the Unified State Plan. Illinois' modified Unified State Plan was released for public comment on March 5, 2018. The summary of the comments to the Unified State Plan can be viewed in Attachment A (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20A%20-%20Public%20Comments.pdf>).

**B. The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities**

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

**B. The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities**

This section provides a snapshot of Illinois' strengths and weaknesses of the 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**

There are several developments since the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act that contribute 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 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 state's workforce development board 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 Accelerating Opportunity Integrated Education, and Training and Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing (ATIM).
- Through a statewide partner, 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.
- 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.

*Business Engagement*

- 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. In 2016, the core partners collaborated on an assessment of business engagement strategies used by their state and local staff. This evaluation led to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board adopting an Integrated Business Engagement Framework in December 2017. This framework was created with input from IWIB business representatives, the four core partners, 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.
- 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.

*Career Pathways for Targeted Populations*

- The state has developed the Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeship and Pathways (WRAP) project. WRAP was developed to ensure that all young people in Illinois reach adulthood having completed workforce readiness programs that prepare them for college and career, while equipping them with the information they need to choose the best career pathway for themselves. WRAP has developed definitions that have been mutually agreed upon by relevant state agencies and committees that provide clarity to the broader fields of education and workforce development as programming and partnerships are developed and implemented.
- 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.
- The state is pursuing innovation in providing services to individuals with disabilities. The Disability Employment Initiative creates opportunities for businesses to access skilled workers, while helping individuals with disabilities overcome barriers 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 the Disability Employment Initiative, Rounds 4 and 5. These purchases and installation addressed both identified compliance deficiencies and reflect, in some instances, the newest technology, tools and software.

**Illinois' Weaknesses**

The challenges for the workforce system in Illinois are listed in the next section. Illinois is positioned to address these challenges through the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board and its committees, the Interagency Work Group and the local areas. 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 lacks 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 workgroup.
- Historically the service delivery model has been characterized by a “siloe” 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 boundaries alignment. Some boundaries do not perfectly align with LWIA boundaries. For example, under Adult Education, “Area Planning Councils districts” do not align with LWIAs, but they are aligned with Community College District

*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 interest in the state’s unified business services framework.
- The level and quality of regional and local public-private sector partnerships varies. In 2018, the state plans to invest in developing the capacity of intermediaries to promote the creation of regional sector partnerships.
- There is an emphasis on a one-size-fits-all approach, with not enough effort to leverage job seekers’ existing knowledge and skills to accelerate training.

*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).
- 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. State Workforce Development Capacity**

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

**Illinois Workforce System**

Governor Rauner’s administration is focused on delivering value for taxpayers, creating a pro-jobs economic climate, ensuring world-class schools and educational options for every Illinoisan and bringing greater accountability to state government. 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 Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (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. Beginning in 2015, the IWIB added several new business members that have accepted a more active role under WIOA. Through the direction of the Board’s Executive Committee, board training has increased, including an orientation process in 2015 and overview of board functions in 2016 that led to the creation of the IWIB Strategic Planning Task Force in late 2016. To support these efforts and the overall

expanded role of the board, full-time staffing was assigned to assist in coordinating all the board's activities. Outreach to consultants further supports the board in meeting its functional requirements.

The state established an Interagency Work Group (IWG) 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 establish effective One-Stop Delivery Systems.

The IWG formally 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 or in a local one-stop. Members maintain open lines of communication, and regularly collaborate on specific day-to-day issues. The IWG creates sub-groups 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 IWG helps state agency and local partner staff effectively execute WIOA within federal statutory and regulatory requirements and state policy directives.

The Interagency Work Group designated a team comprised of staff from the Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Department of Commerce, Illinois Department of Employment Security and the Illinois Department of Human Services to plan and execute a state-wide technical assistance event for core partner staff. The WIOA Summit Planning Workgroup will continue to plan and host regional professional development events for the WIOA partner programs in 2018. These events will be followed by a second state-wide summit in 2019.

#### *State and Regional Planning Process*

In August of 2015, Governor Rauner asked the National Governors Association to facilitate a "Policy Academy" among his key staff, business leaders, state administrators, agency directors and local partners to develop the vision and guiding principles for WIOA state and regional planning. The Education, Workforce and Economic Development Leadership Team (Leadership Team) (Attachment F) (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20F%20-%20Education%20Workforce%20and%20Leadership%20Team.pdf>) emerged from the Policy Academy. 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 Interagency Work Group 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.

Following a joint review of plans by the core partners, the IWG issued updated regional and local planning guidance and directed that LWIBs amend their plans with a modification effective July 2017. This modification incorporated edits the IWB identified to bring plans into compliance with the Act and final regulations. The modified plans will remain in effect until June 2020.

In 2017, the State Workforce Board created a Strategic Plan in alignment with the Unified State Plan to guide its membership as they lead the way to WIOA partner collaboration and integration. The Board established an Executive Committee and standing committees such as the Apprenticeship Committee, the Evaluation and Accountability Committee, and the Information Technology Committee. These committees provide continuity for board leadership in subject matter areas deemed vital by the board.

*State Agency Capacity*

The following is a list 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 Programs
  - Employment and Training under the Community Services Block Grant Program (authorized under Department of Housing and Urban Development)
  - 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 authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006
- Illinois Department of Employment Security
  - Wagner-Peyser Employment Services including Labor Market Information
  - Migrant and 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 Service Employment Program
- Illinois Department of Corrections
  - Section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007

*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 distributing 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. Commerce issues formal guidance to the local areas through policy letters and notices designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. Commerce also provides staff support to the IWIB and its committees and ad hoc task forces. In 2017 Commerce created a new position with the 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 WIOA 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 Title II activities under the Adult Education and Literacy Act and the Postsecondary Perkins (through the Carl D. Perkins and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 (Perkins IV)). As such, the capacity of the Illinois Community College System to deliver services via education and training that align with workforce needs is very strong. The Illinois Community College System is the third largest in the country and is made up of 39 districts with 48 community colleges – all delivering education and training that meet the needs of employers and job seekers in their districts. More individuals start out their postsecondary education at a community college than at a four-year university, which highlights the capacity of the system.

Adult Education provides services to more than 81,000 students statewide and includes instructional and supportive services. The 81 providers in Adult Education coordinate service with the 39 Area Planning Council (APC) Districts to ensure non-duplication of services. A representative of the APC has a seat on the local workforce board to ensure Adult Education services, such as, basic literacy skills, secondary education, English language, and other innovative and contextualized training, such as, the Bridge and Integrated Education and Training initiatives (IETs) that are aligned with the sectors in the local and regional plans.

The intent of Illinois' post-secondary CTE is to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in the global economy. Career and technical education equips students with the foundational knowledge to explore a cluster of occupations and careers. As students evolve 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. Postsecondary Perkins/CTE provides the necessary support via linkages across the state with over 500 CTE programs, many of which are in the three major sectors identified in this plan: TDL, manufacturing and healthcare.

*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 intent of Wagner-Peyser services is to sustain economic growth by meeting the needs of job seekers and employers, increase awareness of resource providers and 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 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 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: <http://www.dol.gov/VETS/E8-30166.pdf>.

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 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. DRS services are designed to prepare an individual for employment through an individualized planning process.

*Illinois 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 such as transportation and uniforms, and child care. Most TANF customers are also eligible for 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. Staffers at 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. In an effort 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*

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 which 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 local YouthBuild programs 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 a 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: <http://www.jobcorps.gov/centers/il.aspx>

### **Local Area Capacity**

The State of Illinois consists of 10 Economic Development Regions and 22 Local Workforce Development Areas. The submission of Regional and Local Plans effective July 1, 2017, provided several examples of best practices in the local areas, which demonstrate their capacity to provide workforce development activities. Local areas are committed to many capacity initiatives, most notably under the categories of:

- Common Intake System
- Coordinated Client Tracking
- Constant Communication
- Working with Customers with Disabilities
- Board Integration

#### **b. State Strategic Vision and Goals**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

##### **1. Vision**

Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.

#### **b. State Strategic Vision and Goals**

##### **1. Vision**

Illinois is planning now for what the state will become during the rest of the 21st century. These are exciting times, marked by dramatic change, challenges and opportunities. Illinois is emboldened by a strong sense of mission and is encouraged by WIOA, which codifies into law many of the strategies that the state has worked on for years.

In June 2017, the IWIB approved its vision for the workforce system, one that the modifications within this state plan will keep firmly in view. While Illinois has many challenges ahead, it will not only strive to continuously improve, but to make decisions and implement solutions that will compel its efforts to receive national recognition. Our stated vision is, *"Illinois will lead the nation by creating a cohesive, business-led system that equally supports the needs of its workforce and its businesses through regional and economic prosperity and global markets."*

The IWIB Strategic Plan further outlines a Mission Statement that is similarly supported by this Unified State Plan modification. Their mission states, "The Illinois workforce system's purpose is to integrate education, workforce and economic development resources and services that support economic growth and job creation for individuals, businesses and communities in the State." The Unified State Plan vision further supports and defines the IWIB's intent. In addition, the Unified State Plan's principles directly support the Guiding Principles of the IWIB Strategic Plan.

#### *Vision Statement*

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.

#### *Principles:*

- Demand Driven Orientation - Through a sector strategy framework, the state should support the systemic assessment of business needs for talent across local, regional and state levels, and ensure that strong partnerships with business driven decision-making across the talent pipeline.
- Strong Partnerships with Business at All Levels - Strong partnerships with business should assist employers to define in-demand skills and articulate those needs to education and training providers.

Strong partnerships at the regional and local level should be recognized and inform the development of high-quality partnerships across the state.

- Career Pathways to Jobs of Today and Tomorrow - Partnerships with business should drive the development of career pathways that meet employers' skills needs today, while offering individuals clear opportunities to build and upgrade their skills and advance their career over time. Those pathways should be integrated within the P-20 system, including adult education, to help students and young adults identify career pathway options and offer flexibility to build upon their skills to meet the evolving needs of the global economy.
- 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.
- Clear Metrics for Progress and Success - The Unified State Plan should include metrics for assessing progress and success. As the talent pipeline serves two customers - businesses and individuals - those metrics should reflect the strategic priorities of the state that relate to building a globally competitive workforce. Illinois will develop metrics or examine existing framework metrics that define successful career pathway programs (i.e., Alliance for Quality Career Pathways (AQCP)).
- 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.

## 2. Goals

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the above analysis of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers of employment\* and other populations.\*\*

Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

\* Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals. \*\* Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

### **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. 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. 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,
  - GED testing,
  - Disability accommodations, and
  - Acquiring workplace skills and other training tailored to address barriers to employment for special populations prior to or along with technical skill training.
- 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 up 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.

**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**

Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

**Performance Goals**

Illinois submitted proposed performance targets along with supporting documentation (including source references) associated with the PY 2018-2019 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.

In preparation for the submittal of performance goals, the Interagency Work Group established a performance accountability subgroup consisting of representatives from the core partners. The subgroup 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 subgroup 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 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;
- 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 of the Interagency Work Group will present performance data to the IWIB quarterly, to meet the requirement in WIOA that the board assess overall effectiveness of the workforce system.

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. Indicators negotiated for PY 2018-PY 2019 are:

- Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs: indicators for employment 2nd quarter, employment 4th quarter, median earning 2nd quarter (excluding youth) and credential attainment rate;
- Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy program: indicator for measurable skill gains; and
- Title III Wagner-Peyser Employment Service: indicators for employment 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, employment 4<sup>th</sup> quarter and median earnings 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter.

Note: Vocational Rehabilitation will not be negotiating levels of performance for PY 2018 and PY 2019. All indicators are deemed baseline.

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 10.

**Table 10: PY 2018 and PY 2019 Proposed Levels for WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth and Wagner-Peyser Performance Targets for Illinois - Proposed Levels of Performance for Illinois**

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>PY 2018 Proposed Goals</b>	<b>PY2019 Proposed Goals</b>
<b>ADULTS</b>		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter	72.4	72.4
Employment Rate 4th Quarter	71	71
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter	\$5,000	\$5,000
Credential Attainment w/in 4 Quarters	55.6	55.6
<b>DISLOCATED WORKERS</b>		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter	78	78
Employment Rate 4th Quarter	75.4	75.4
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter	\$6,978	\$6,978
Credential Attainment w/in 4 Quarters	60.5	60.5
<b>YOUTH</b>		
Employment/Placement Rate 2nd Quarter	73	73
Employment/Placement Rate 4th Quarter	61.1	61.1
Credential Attainment w/in 4 Quarters	69	69
<b>WAGNER-PEYSER</b>		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter	55.7	55.7
Employment Rate 4th Quarter	59.1	59.1
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter	\$4,911	\$4,911

**4. Assessment**

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

**Assessment and Evaluation**

Under the previous Illinois Workforce Investment Board Act, Illinois was required to report on ten established benchmarks designed to provide a comprehensive and balanced picture of the status and progress of workforce development services in Illinois. They were divided into three general categories:

*Workforce Quality Benchmarks*

The first six benchmarks measured workforce quality and are arranged in an order that tracked the life of a worker through various educational milestones. These benchmarks included three youth benchmarks.

- Educational level of working-age adults
- Percentage of the adult workforce in education or workforce training
- Adult literacy
- Percentage of high school graduates transitioning to education or workforce training
- High school dropout rate

- The number of youth transitioning from 8th grade to 9th grade

*Earnings Benchmarks*

The next two benchmarks focused on earnings, a primary indicator of workforce quality.

- Percentage of individuals and families at economic self-sufficiency
- Average growth in pay Competitive Business Advantage Benchmarks (The final two benchmarks are key indicators of Illinois' competitive business advantage.)
- Net job growth
- Productivity per employee

The General Assembly recognized that several of these benchmarks no longer were effective measures of the workforce system, did not have the necessary data to accurately reflect Illinois' efforts, or were not measurable against other states. Therefore, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board Act was revised in 2017 with the requirement that the board identify additional measurements of performance. Through this Act, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board's Evaluation and Accountability Committee (EAC) is tasked with oversight of performance within the workforce system. The EAC will compile an inventory to identify all required performance measures of the core and required programs. As necessary, the EAC will recommend those measures and report on them in the annual Benchmarking Workforce Development Report submitted to the General Assembly.

The EAC will consider refining the State's Benchmark Report to identify additional metrics (such as the Alliance for Quality Career Pathway (AQCP)) that will assess both our progress towards meeting WIOA goals and the effectiveness of the strategies to move towards those goals. There is also interest in exploring formulaic methods of evaluation that provide a measurement of return on investment (ROI). The board is interested in identifying best practices for ensuring businesses have access to the most qualified individuals for their employment needs, while the system continues to serve populations targeted within this plan.

The expanded benchmark report will clearly link overall organizational principles to program goals, strategies and outcomes. This will provide the framework for an ongoing feedback mechanism, through which program goals and strategies can be consistently evaluated with regard to their contributions towards program outcomes and may be adjusted if those outcomes indicate a need. By maintaining this "clear line of sight" between goals, strategies and outcomes, the assessment process becomes much more comprehensible and transparent for all the WIOA partners, as well as for the IWIB in its oversight role.

The strategic intent is to accomplish a fundamental shift toward measuring the system's ability to make our workers and businesses as globally competitive as possible. While each program will maintain its mandated measures, we will work with the businesses to identify what success means in serving employers. Potential measures could include the areas of program flexibility and responsiveness; reducing the amount of time required for new hires to reach full productivity; reducing the amount of time required for new program participants to begin earning money; reducing the amount of time needed to fill vacant positions; and working toward wholesale improvement of essential workplace skills.

The Interagency Work Group will respond to the IWIB's renewed focus on performance and continuous improvement by working with partners to integrate evaluation and research projects that impact the workforce system in Illinois. The state will also consider the information developed by the interagency data team and other program-specific evaluations, research reports and pilot programs, such as the Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing Program, Workforce Data Quality Initiative and the Disability Employment Initiative in the development of an integrated evaluation and research approach.

**c. State Strategy**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training

activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

1. Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). “Career pathway” is defined at WIOA section 3(7). “In-demand industry sector or occupation” is defined at WIOA section 3(23).

**State Strategies: Industry and Sector Partnerships, Career Pathways**

Below are the state’s strategies to achieve our vision and goals. They consist of six major strategies, and each directly underpins Illinois’ commitment to engage and support all parts of our workforce, education and economic development systems as we move to a transparent and seamless system. 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, and the identification of innovative efforts. The system contains bedrock principles of holistic career pathway management for secondary, as well as postsecondary students and workers and demand-responsive solutions for employers. These strategies are at the foundation of addressing the needs of individuals who have barriers to employment. The activities associated with implementing this strategy will be fully described in the operational planning section.

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

The state workforce board has insisted upon 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 integrated current state and regional planning initiatives and resources of the core state agency partners and other non-core 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 will continue to support these efforts to ensure investment in resources and promotion of skills and career ladders in targeted industry and high demand occupations. 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 all levels of education, workforce and economic development and lay the foundation for employer-driven regional sector initiatives.

*Strategy 3: Provide Career Pathways for Economic Advancement*

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: Coordinate and Enhance Career Services and Case Management*

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) has 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 Interagency Work Group will use this forum to develop and implement policies for integrated and enhanced career services and case management. In addition, these policies will help inform the curriculum developed in the Workforce Academy mentioned in Activity 4.3 under III.a.2.A.

The IWIB is developing policies that focus on customer needs through a customer-centered design service delivery model. In addition to business and job seeker customers, it has identified staffs of the one-stop centers and of partner agencies and other stakeholders of the system as vital sources for information gathering and for

receipt of technical assistance and training. These efforts will produce better outcomes and higher customer satisfaction.

*Strategy 5: 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.

Additionally, Illinois will continue to expand its resources for labor market information to ensure it accurately reflects the ever-changing environment within Illinois' workforce. Strong consideration for expanded dashboards, readily available through current technology, will be a focus of the IWIB in 2018 to better match competencies between employer's skill demands and job seekers.

*Strategy 6: Improve 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 Interagency Work Group, 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. The infrastructure to support and integrate labor market information with workforce partners and education partners was bolstered by the award of a Workforce Data Quality Initiative Grant in 2012. Labor market information from 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 Higher Education's Commission on the Future of the Workforce, ICCB Strategic Plan, and 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 recommendation that infuse demand driven career pathway approaches into secondary curriculum.

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 Career Pathways for Economic Advancement*

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 an 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 up their career ladder. Put more simply, the emphasis will shift from finding a job to developing a career.

*Coordinate and Enhance Career Services and Case Management*

As stated in Section III.b.2, the IWIB has implemented a collaborative policy development process that the Interagency Work Group will use in developing policies for integrated and enhanced career services and case management, and include provisions to remove barriers that hinder providing services to special populations. 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 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.

*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](http://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 Interagency Work Group, 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.

2. Describe the strategies the State will use to 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 to the State to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also describe strategies to strengthen workforce development activities in regard to weaknesses identified in section II(a)(2).

**Alignment of Core, Required and Optional Partner Programs**

In August of 2015, Governor Rauner asked the National Governors Association to facilitate a “Policy Academy” among his key staff, business leaders, state administrators, agency directors and local partners to develop the

vision and guiding principles for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) state and regional planning. The 2015-2016 Education, Workforce and Economic Development Leadership Team (Leadership Team) emerged from the Policy Academy that includes high-level state policymakers with the authority to make commitments on behalf of their respective agencies, key members of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) and other key public and private stakeholders whose involvement is critical to the development of the Unified State Plan. The policy academy is an example of Illinois’ efforts to align the core program, required programs and other key education, workforce and economic development resources in the State of Illinois.

**Table 11: 2015-16 Illinois Education, Workforce and Economic Leadership Team**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Dr. Karen Hunter Anderson	Executive Director	Illinois Community College Board
Dr. Jim Applegate	Executive Director	Illinois Board of Higher Education
Mayor Tom Ashby	IWIB Member President	Coordinated Transportation Development, Inc.
Doug Baker	President	Northern Illinois University
Leah Bolander	Recruiter	Patterson Technology Center
Tony Esposito	Chief of Staff	Department of Commerce
Trey Childress	Deputy Governor	Office of the Governor
Julie Courtney	President	Illinois Workforce Partnership
Carey Cranston	President	Fox College
Elizabeth Dickson	Director of Human Resources	Engineered Glass Products, LLC
Jim Dimas	Secretary	Department of Human Services
Diane Grigsby-Jackson	Director	Family and Community Services
Alan Summers	Associate Director	Family and Community Services
Brian Durham	Deputy Director of Academic Affairs	Illinois Community College Board
Matt Eggemeyer	Vice President of Sales	Keats Manufacturing
Dr. Kenneth Ender	President	William Rainey Harper College
Jennifer Foster	Deputy Director of Adult Education and Workforce	IL Community College Board
David Friedman	Chief Executive Officer	Autonomyworks
Jonathan Furr	Executive Director	Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University
Vickie Haugen	President and CEO	Vermilion Advantage

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Sylvia Jenkins	President	Moraine Valley Community College
Andrew Duren	Executive Vice President of Administrative Services	
Gretchen Koch	Executive Director of Workforce Development Strategies	CompTIA
Kathy Lively	Chief Executive Officer	MAN-TRA-CON Corporation, LWIA 25
Laz Lopez	Association Superintendent for Teaching and Learning	High School District 214
Alicia Martin	President	Illinois Chapter, Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc.
Mandy Martin	Corporate Human Resources Manager	North American Lighting
Mike Massie	IWIB Member Attorney at Law	Massie and Rennick, LLC
Jeff Mays	Director	Department of Employment Security
Jim McDonough	Chief of Staff	Department of Employment Security
Dolores Simon	Executive Deputy Director of Business Services	Department of Employment Security
Terry Scrogum	Senior Policy Advisor	Department of Employment Security
Marlon McClinton	President and CEO	Utilivate Technologies, LLC
Vic Narusis	Deputy Director Office of Business Development	Department of Commerce
Jim Nelson	Vice President of External Affairs	Illinois Manufacturers' Association
Karin Norington-Reaves	Chief Executive Officer	Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (LWIA 7)
Terri Payne	Assistant to the Secretary Treasurer	AFL-CIO
Mark Petrilli	State Director, Illinois SBDC Network	Department of Commerce
Dr. Beth Purvis	Secretary of Education	Office of the Governor
John Rico	IWIB President, President and CEO	Rico Enterprises
Julio Rodriguez	Deputy Director, Office of Employment and Training	Department of Commerce
Manny Rodriguez	Senior Director	Jane Addams Resource Corp
Juan Salgado	President and CEO	Instituto Del Progreso Latino

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Margie Schiemann	IWIB Member Director of Infrastructure Programs and Support	Nicor Gas
Kris Smith	Director, Division of Rehabilitation Services	Department of Human Services
Doug Morton	Manager, Division of Rehabilitation Services Strategic Management Unit	Department of Human Services
Dr. Tony Smith	State Superintendent of Education	Illinois State Board of Education
Wegi Stewart	President	The Community Foundation of Macon County
Trina Taylor	Deputy Director of Service Delivery	Department of Employment Security
Carrie Thomas	Executive Director	Chicago Jobs Council
Mike Uremovich	President	Manhattan Mechanical Services
Terri Winfree	President	Prairie State College
Andria Winters	Assistant Director	Department of Commerce
David Wu	Director of Government Transformation	Office of the Governor

*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 Work Group 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. 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*

The IWIB approved a process and a timetable for the coordinated and comprehensive review of regional plans, local plans and MOUs. This approval was based on a recommendation from the Interagency Work Group.

- The State-level review was organized “vertically” by region with regional plan components being reviewed first, local plan components for all LWIAs within a region being reviewed second and MOUs for all LWIAs within a region third.
- 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 2);
  - 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 Work Group;
  - 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 plans will remain in effect until June 2020.

**Strategies to Strengthen Workforce Development Activities in Regard to Weaknesses**

The comprehensive review of the regional and local plans and the MOUs will provide a baseline for continuous improvement and the implementation of the state’s WIOA strategies at the regional and local levels. The state recognizes this process is a first step in addressing the challenges of aligning the core, required and optional partners and other available resources. The regional review process will allow 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, the core partners intend to establish policy that each of their local program staff will ensure every participant has an individual assessment of their current essential workplace skills, identify any areas for improvement and ensure the participant becomes proficient in these skills while enrolled in one or more of the WIOA programs.

Likewise, each participant will be evaluated to determine their technical skill proficiency to identify occupational skill gaps relevant to occupations in-demand in their region and the programs will coordinate services to ensure the skill gaps are addressed while the individual is enrolled. 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 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 Work Group, 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 in all the programs. The core partners are discussing the development of systemic, cross-program procedures to ensure each participant receives every service for which they are eligible that is relevant to their securing employment.

Illinois will address the challenges of a geographically and economically diverse state where the coordination of career services and programs varies widely. 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 are under development to formally break down the silo approach by requiring cross-program integration of individualized assessment and services.

*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](http://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 Interagency Work Group, 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.

*Fostering the Development & Acceptance of Innovation*

During the recent regional innovation initiatives and planning efforts it became apparent that the willingness to embrace new and improved strategies varied across the ten Economic Development Regions and also across partners. No one region was found to have equal commitment to change from all its partners; while no one partner was found to have equal commitment to change from offices across all the regions. The core partners will take steps to improve innovation by emphasizing a more inclusive approach that fosters more grass roots innovation rather than the traditional top down strategy. State set aside funds can be made available to promote regional innovation. Where innovation initiatives involve national competitive grants, efforts will be made to jointly develop applications with regions committed to the project. The overarching goal is to allow every organization involved to feel a sense of ownership in the process of innovation.

*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 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. 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, we are integrating a shared vision and language around Career Pathways. 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 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 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**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that support the State's strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II.(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs.

#### **a. State Strategy Implementation**

##### **1. State Board Functions**

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e., provide a description of Board operational structures and decision-making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

#### **a. State Strategy Implementation**

##### **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 the last year, the IWIB initiated and completed a strategic planning process that will establish the vision for the state's workforce system and provide a roadmap for board members to create a sound operational structure to ensure the expanded functions under WIOA are carried out. This planning process moves the board from a tactical, operational approach to one where the members will think strategically and serve as system leaders. The Unified State Plan for Illinois is the first tangible product resulting from the IWIB strategic planning process.

*IWIB Strategic Plan*

As reflected in this plan, the business members that led the IWIB Strategic Planning Task Force developed a vision, mission and nine guiding principles that were approved at its June 2017 quarterly meeting. Working in four goal teams -- focused on business engagement, customer-centered design, data & technology and board effectiveness -- a framework emerged that identified five 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;
- Promote board member accountability.

The goal team discussions were facilitated by high-level management staff of the core partners, and included additional IWIB members, management and staff of core and required programs, businesspeople, local program administrators and other stakeholders of the workforce and education systems. A plan was implemented that assured inclusion of the full IWIB and local boards in discussions surrounding the strategic plan. Ultimately, the goal teams operationalized the objectives of the plan through a total of seventeen priority activities. Each activity was assigned to one of six current IWIB or system sub-groups to take the lead on implementation. As of the submission of this state plan, each assigned lead group has met to discuss the possible action steps and key strategies that will become part of a detailed work plan. Necessary resources and an appropriate timeline are also included in those discussions. Attachment E (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20E%20-%20IWIB%20Report%20on%20Disadvantaged%20Youth.pdf>) is the IWIB Strategic Plan.

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. Beginning in 2016, the IWIB expanded its meeting schedule to include an annual retreat held over a day and a half of meetings. This has allowed the board the opportunity for additional in-person discussion time to focus on important areas of WIOA implementation and further understand their roles and functions as board members. Currently, the board is considering expanding their meeting schedule even further in recognition of the need for continued consultation on strategic planning efforts, and to provide opportunities for coordinated discussions with local boards and businesses.

While the IWIB began strengthening local involvement in the policy making process, the Strategic Plan further emphasizes 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 local workforce innovation board (LWIB) chairs, 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.

*Committees, Task Forces and Work Groups*

The IWIB's structure of standing committees, task forces and work groups further expand collaborative efforts in Illinois by inviting business 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 state universities to support its work.

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. 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.

The IWIB Executive Committee is responsible for establishing the committees, task forces or 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 is identified for each Committee and Task Force to ensure continued effective, efficient and focused efforts on the IWIB's behalf.

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 provides 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.

## **2. Implementation of State Strategy**

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies.

### **2. Implementation of State Strategy**

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

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

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies, as appropriate.

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 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 Work Group, each program is taking steps to assess how services overlap and to identify opportunities for improved service alignment in support of the state strategies. For example, since the passage of WIOA, the core partners contributed funding, staff and facilities to develop state and regional labor market information, establish strategic planning frameworks for community colleges and WIOA programs, and enhance integrated business services. This work started with the Workforce Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for community colleges, adult education, career and technical education, business and industry, and corporate training. The strategies identified under the WESP are in alignment with the Unified Plan's strategic priorities. Woven throughout these strategies will be a continued assessment of ways that funds from each program can be

used to leverage other funding, especially private-sector support, toward program alignment and implementing the following strategies.

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

The state is coordinating 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 resources of the core state agency partners and other partners, including the economic development arm of Commerce. This process will include the following activities that provide support for regional planning and provide the basis for implementing the remaining strategies, especially regional sector partnerships.

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

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) has established an Evaluation and Accountability Committee (EAC) that will recommend tools and measures in order to (a) determine whether the Illinois WIOA Unified State Plan and other WIOA requirements are being carried out effectively, and (b) identify opportunities to improve in the effectiveness and efficiency of Illinois' workforce development system. This committee will also serve 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 will create a framework for its activities. 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. The EAC will identify continuous improvement opportunities following a review of the common WIOA performance measures for the core partners and make recommendations in strategies that the entire system can learn from and implement.

The state will also review the prior results from the *Benchmark Report* to identify their relevance to today's workforce system and will examine new measures that can be compared to select other states within the region and nationally. The *Benchmark Report* has been produced annually and includes education, workforce and economic development indicators and benchmarks, including an economic self-sufficiency benchmark for each region and effectiveness measures for individual projects. Revising the *Benchmark Report* will involve bringing together major stakeholders, as well as state agency partners to develop strategic indicators and benchmarks for state and regional economic development.

In subsequent years, the committee will begin looking at larger questions related to evaluation and performance. It should be noted that the focus of the EAC 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 will open new evaluation and research opportunities to support system improvement.

The work of the EAC will be critical in updating resources and planning guidelines in advance of the 2020 regional and local plans. Illinois has a solid foundation of resources that were developed for the 2016 regional and local plans including 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. The partners use these projections to identify in-demand industries and occupations. 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.

Shown below, in Figures 2a and 2b and in Tables 12a-d, are examples of information that was prepared for each region to use in their regional planning processes in 2016 (Health Care in the Northeast Region and for Manufacturing in the Southwest Region). The information provided to each region is currently available on Illinois workNet (Attachment O) (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/DownloadPrint/Attachment%20O%20-%20IL%20Regional%20Planning%20Data%20-%203%2018%202016.pdf>). Tables 12a and 12b show regional employment across industry sectors and are the basis for Figures 2a and 2b. Tables 12c and 12d show regional employment within specific industries in the example sectors. Tables 12e and 12f show regional employment within occupations associated with those industries. 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 12a: Northeast Region Employment by Industry/Occupational Cluster**

<b>NORTHEAST REGION</b>					
<b>EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY / OCCUPATIONAL CLUSTER</b>					
Cluster	2012 Employment	2022 Employment	Net Employment Change	Percent Employment Change	Concentration (Location Quotient)
Marketing & Sales	1,486,398	1,655,634	169,236	11.4%	1.02
Hospitality & Tourism	1,072,558	1,195,218	122,660	11.4%	0.64
Law & Public Safety	659,602	785,008	125,406	19.0%	1.17
Business Management	503,349	583,855	80,506	16.0%	1.42
Health Care	498,816	581,060	82,244	16.5%	0.81
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	390,479	433,897	43,418	11.1%	1.25
Education & Training	379,002	398,055	19,053	5.0%	0.95
Manufacturing	376,840	374,497	- 2,343	-0.6%	1.12
Finance	258,940	269,960	11,020	4.3%	0.96
Construction	161,560	185,578	24,018	14.9%	0.71
Information Technology	64,820	86,724	21,904	33.8%	1.05
Arts & Audio Visual	60,547	64,394	3,847	6.4%	0.78
Research & Development	48,530	51,189	2,659	5.5%	0.72
Agriculture	14,033	16,210	2,177	15.5%	0.30
Energy	12,304	12,919	615	5.0%	0.46

**Table 12b: Southwest Region Employment by Industry/Occupational Cluster**

<b>SOUTHWEST REGION</b>					
<b>EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY / OCCUPATIONAL CLUSTER</b>					
Cluster	2012 Employment	2022 Employment	Net Employment Change	Percent Employment Change	Concentration (Location Quotient)
Marketing & Sales	74,032	79,564	5,532	7.5%	0.92
Hospitality & Tourism	58,413	62,192	3,779	6.5%	0.92
Health Care	33,642	38,368	4,726	14.0%	0.93
Education & Training	25,437	26,932	1,495	5.9%	1.06
Law & Public Safety	20,727	23,191	2,464	11.9%	0.65
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	20,635	22,985	2,350	11.4%	1.32
Manufacturing	21,373	21,525	152	0.7%	2.88
Business Management	14,867	16,510	1,643	11.1%	1.19
Construction	13,534	14,901	1,367	10.1%	0.96
Finance	8,889	8,885	- 4	0.0%	0.75
Agriculture	6,485	6,392	- 93	-1.4%	2.44
Arts & Audio Visual	3,806	3,611	- 195	-5.1%	0.81
Research & Development	2,982	3,175	193	6.5%	0.84
Information Technology	2,294	2,984	690	30.1%	0.65
Energy	1,746	1,703	- 43	-2.5%	1.10

Figure 2a: Major Industry Clusters in the Northeast Region

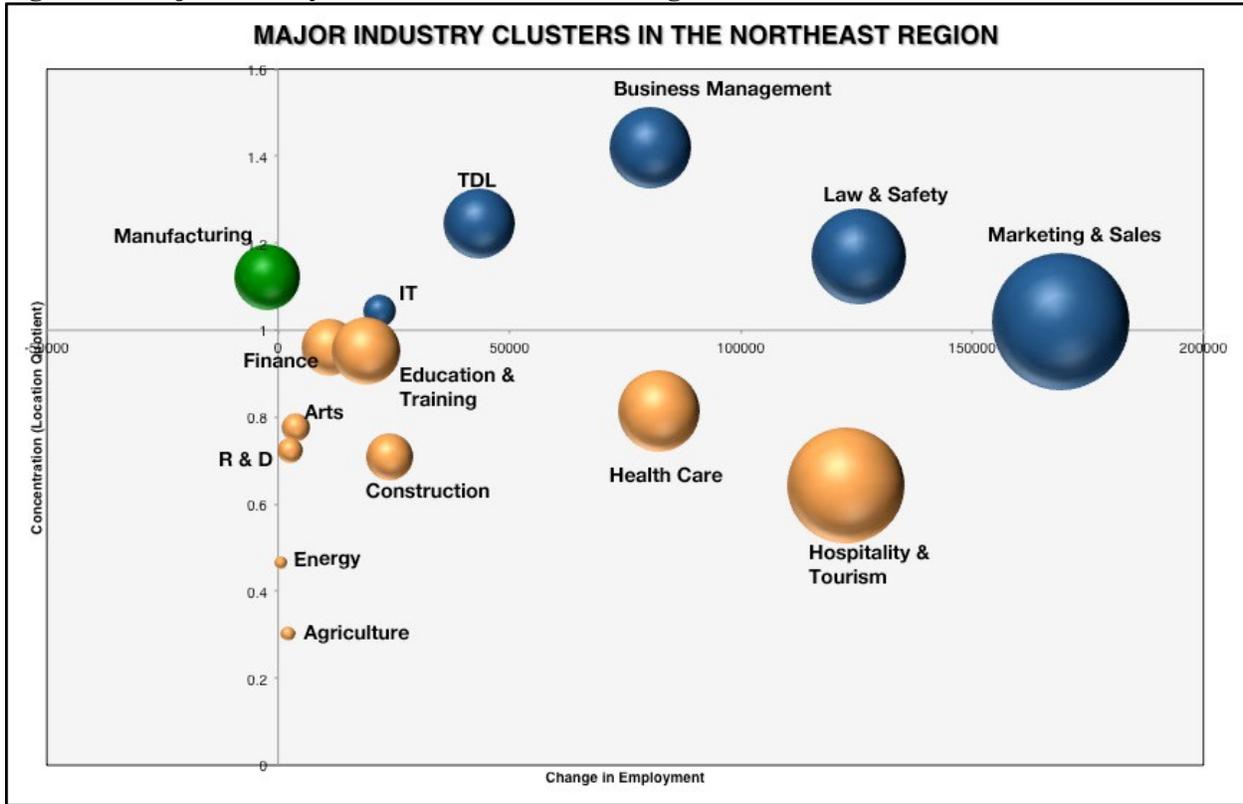
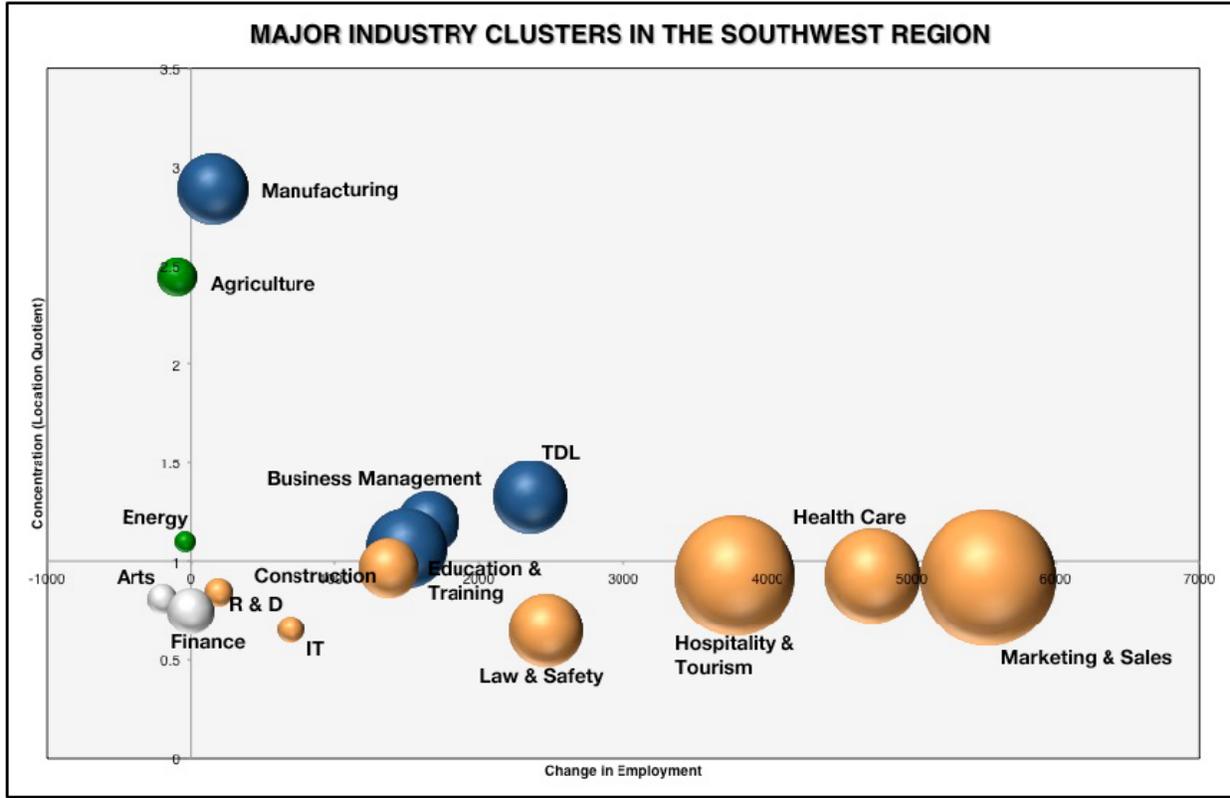


Figure 2b: Major Industry Clusters in the Southwest Region



**Table 12c: Leading, Emerging and Maturing Health Care Industries in the Northeast Region**

<b>HEALTH CARE</b>								
<b>LEADING, EMERGING AND MATURING INDUSTRIES IN THE NORTHEAST REGION</b>								
NAICS	DESCRIPTION	2012 Employment	2022 Employment	Employment Change 2012- 22	% Change 2012-22	2014 Establishments	2014 LQ	Class
621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	169,318	217,633	48,315	28.5%	18,124	0.80	Emerging
622	Hospitals	168,462	171,202	2,740	1.6%	195	0.85	Emerging
623	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	81,533	99,606	18,073	22.2%	893	0.73	Emerging
624	Social Assistance	79,503	92,619	13,116	16.5%	3,942	0.86	Emerging

**Table 12d: Leading, Emerging and Maturing Manufacturing Industries in the Southwestern Region**

<b>MANUFACTURING</b>								
<b>LEADING, EMERGING AND MATURING INDUSTRIES IN THE SOUTHWESTERN REGION</b>								
NAICS	DESCRIPTION	2012 Employment	2022 Employment	Employment Change 2012- 22	% Change 2012-22	2014 Establishments	2014 LQ	Class
311	Food Manufacturing	3,468	3,502	34	1.0%	62	1.20	Leading
312	Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing	84	74	(10)	-11.9%	12	0.22	
313	Textile Mills	-	-	-	0.0%	3	-	
314	Textile Product Mills	24	24	-	0.0%	9	0.10	
315	Apparel Manufacturing	-	-	-	0.0%	4	-	
316	Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing	-	-	-	0.0%	2	-	
321	Wood Product Manufacturing	343	385	42	12.2%	23	0.51	Emerging
322	Paper Manufacturing	475	432	(43)	-9.1%	11	0.63	
323	Printing and Related Support Activities	604	455	(149)	-24.7%	52	0.66	
324	Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing	1,056	1,082	26	2.5%	13	4.78	Leading
325	Chemical Manufacturing	966	938	(28)	-2.9%	31	0.62	
326	Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	156	146	(10)	-6.4%	16	0.12	
327	Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	782	936	154	19.7%	27	1.08	Leading
331	Primary Metal Manufacturing	5,847	5,868	21	0.4%	16	7.38	Leading
332	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	3,443	3,577	134	3.9%	107	1.23	Leading
333	Machinery Manufacturing	1,227	1,182	(45)	-3.7%	42	0.56	
334	Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	32	27	(5)	-15.6%	16	0.01	
335	Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing	903	888	(15)	-1.7%	11	1.22	Maturing
336	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	1,431	1,474	43	3.0%	21	0.48	Emerging
337	Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing	49	51	2	4.1%	23	0.07	Emerging
339	Miscellaneous Manufacturing	483	484	1	0.2%	55	0.42	Emerging

**Table 12e: Occupational Employment in Health Care Industries in the Northeast Region**

<b>HEALTH CARE</b>													
<b>INDUSTRIES FOR PRINCIPAL OCCUPATIONS IN THE NORTHEASTERN REGION</b>													
NAICS	Description	2014 Establishments	2012 Employment	2022 Employment	Industry Class	Pathway	SOC Code	SOC Title	Average Annual Job Openings	Annual Occupation Openings in Industry	Median Annual	Education Entry Level	Experience Entry Level
621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	18,124	169,318	217,633	Emerging					482			
622	Hospitals	195	168,462	171,202	Emerging					1,421			
623	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	893	81,533	99,606	Emerging	Therapeutic Services	29-1141	Registered Nurses	2400	168	\$71,914	Associate's or Bachelor's degree	None
624	Social Assistance	3,942	79,503	92,619	Emerging					22			
621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	18,124	169,318	217,633	Emerging					68			
622	Hospitals	195	168,462	171,202	Emerging					28			
623	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	893	81,533	99,606	Emerging	Therapeutic Services	29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	109	3	\$92,698	Master's degree	None
624	Social Assistance	3,942	79,503	92,619	Emerging					1			
621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	18,124	169,318	217,633	Emerging					204			
622	Hospitals	195	168,462	171,202	Emerging	Therapeutic Services	29-2021	Dental Hygienists	209	1	\$73,703	Associate's degree	None
621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	18,124	169,318	217,633	Emerging					179			
622	Hospitals	195	168,462	171,202	Emerging	Therapeutic Services	29-2041	Emergency Medical Techs & Paramedics	326	50	\$52,893	Postsecondary non-degree award	None
621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	18,124	169,318	217,633	Emerging					11			
622	Hospitals	195	168,462	171,202	Emerging	Therapeutic Services	29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	301	49	\$28,119	High school diploma or equivalent	None
623	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	893	81,533	99,606	Emerging					1			
621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	18,124	169,318	217,633	Emerging					205			
622	Hospitals	195	168,462	171,202	Emerging					116			
623	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	893	81,533	99,606	Emerging	Therapeutic Services	29-2061	Licensed Practical Nurses	710	278	\$48,251	Postsecondary non-degree award	None
624	Social Assistance	3,942	79,503	92,619	Emerging					10			

**Table 12f: Occupational Employment in Manufacturing Industries in the Southwest Region**

<b>MANUFACTURING</b>														
<b>INDUSTRIES FOR PRINCIPAL OCCUPATIONS IN THE SOUTHWEST REGION</b>														
NAICS	Description	2014 Establishments	2012 Employment	2022 Employment	Industry Class	Pathway	SOC Code	SOC Title	Average Annual Job Openings	Annual Occupation Openings in Industry	Median Annual	Education Entry Level	Experience Entry Level	Training Entry Level
334	Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	16	32	27		Manufacturing Production Process Development	15-1132	Software Developers, Applications**	24	1	\$83,095	Bachelor's degree	None	None
334	Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	16	32	27		Manufacturing Production Process Development	15-1133	Software Developers, Systems Software**	14	2	\$93,438	Bachelor's degree	None	None
332	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	107	3,443	3,577	Leading					1				
333	Machinery Manufacturing	42	1,227	1,182						2				
334	Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	16	32	27		Manufacturing Production Process Development	17-2141	Mechanical Engineers**	13	2	\$74,900	Bachelor's degree	None	None
336	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	21	1,431	1,474	Emerging					2				
334	Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	16	32	27		Manufacturing Production Process Development	41-4011	Sales Reps, Wholesale/Mfg. Tech/SciProds**	16	1	\$73,452	Bachelor's degree	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training
311	Food Manufacturing	62	3,468	3,502	Leading					1				
323	Printing and Related Support Activities	52	694	455						1				
332	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	107	3,443	3,577	Leading	Manufacturing Production Process Development	41-4012	Sales Reps/Wholesale/Mfg. Ex. Tech/Scientific**	63	1	\$49,896	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training
333	Machinery Manufacturing	42	1,227	1,182						1				
311	Food Manufacturing	62	3,468	3,502	Leading					1				
325	Chemical Manufacturing	31	966	938						1				
326	Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	16	156	146						1				
332	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	107	3,443	3,577	Leading	Logistics & Inventory Control	43-5071	Shipping Receiving & Traffic Clerks**	33	1	\$31,334	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Short-term on-the-job training
333	Machinery Manufacturing	42	1,227	1,182						1				
336	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	21	1,431	1,474	Emerging					1				
311	Food Manufacturing	62	3,468	3,502	Leading					3				
312	Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing	12	84	74						1				
321	Wood Product Manufacturing	23	343	365	Emerging					1				
322	Paper Manufacturing	11	475	432						1				
325	Chemical Manufacturing	31	966	938						2				
326	Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	16	156	146						1				
327	Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	27	782	938	Leading					1				
331	Primary Metal Manufacturing	16	5,847	5,868	Leading					1				
332	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	107	3,443	3,577	Leading					2				
333	Machinery Manufacturing	42	1,227	1,182						2				
336	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	21	1,431	1,474	Emerging	Maintenance, Installation & Repair	49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics**	37	1	\$54,703	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training

*Activity 1.2: Establish Regional Planning Areas*

The Governor has determined that Illinois' ten economic development regions will 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 by the Governor based on an analysis of labor market information and several other data factors including statewide commuting patterns surrounding major and minor metropolitan centers. As shown below and in Attachment S (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20S%20-%20Local%20Workforce%20Area%20and%20Regional%20Planning%20Area%20Map.pdf>), 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 and provide more efficient service delivery. The state continues to encourage CEO's 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 have counties that extend into an adjacent economic development region. The IWIB will take steps to address this situation in 2018.

*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 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, 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' 2017 WIOA summit that included more than 500 attendees.

The Interagency Work Group developed a coordinated Regional & Local Plan / Memorandum of Understanding review process that includes a formal report and technical assistance reviews 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. LWIBs submitted their initial regional (and local) plans to the Interagency Work Group in May of 2016. With the subsequent release of WIOA final rules, LWIBs were directed to submit modifications to bring plans into alignment with the new regulations by May of 2017. The Interagency Work Group 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: [www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning/Pages/Plans\\_MOUs\\_Dashboard.aspx](http://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning/Pages/Plans_MOUs_Dashboard.aspx).

**Strategy 2: Support Employer-Driven Regional Sector Initiatives**

Illinois has been actively engaged in sectorial 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 will ensure limited dollars are more wisely directed toward the leading and emerging occupations.

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) continued the implementation of the Workforce Education Strategic Plan 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 Interagency 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 describes how state and regional resources can be used to launch, expand and support employer-led partnerships (see Attachment G) (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20G%20-%20Illinois%20Sector%20Partnership.pdf>). 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 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. In 2015, Commerce promoted sector partnerships to numerous local areas and economic development offices. In 2016 and 2017, Commerce staff was invited to lead sessions on sector partnerships at state conferences of local chamber of commerce executives and rural economic development professionals. Commerce also leveraged the work of a \$4 million Sector Partner National Emergency Grant to provide training and work-based learning to long-term unemployed in the healthcare, manufacturing and transportation, distribution & logistics industries, as well as to support regional planning efforts through projects ranging from asset mapping to LWIB orientation guides.

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

As required by WIOA 101(d)(3)(iv), the IWIB will work together with the Interagency Work Group and the Integrated Business Services Workgroup to better align and integrate business services among the core programs, along with state and regional economic development 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” have already been met.

State partners will support these regional integrated business service teams through guides and tools, as well as professional development and training. This integrated business services initiative 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 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 Career Pathways for Economic Advancement**

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 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 one of the required state legislative members of the IWIB were actively engaged in the Higher Education Commission on the Future of the Workforce, who sought to ensure that practices and policy recommendations to increase post-secondary education attainment and address regional workforce needs are embedded into WIOA implementation strategies. The work of the Commission was completed in August 15, 2016.

The Illinois Community College Board, through its Adult Education and Workforce Division, 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. With the implementation of two strategic plans, the Workforce Education Strategic Plan and the Adult Education Strategic 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 also laying 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. The IWIB and some of the core and required partner agencies adopted a statewide definition of “Career Pathways.” This definition adapts the current definition under WIOA and expands 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), and the Illinois State Board of Education (K-12).

- 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 a counselors training, a forthcoming Special Populations Academy and a forthcoming summit on nontraditional careers.
- Illinois is part of a College and Career Readiness Network sponsored by JP Morgan Chase and the Council of Chief State School Officers. This effort supports planning efforts to design and implement a rigorous, demand-driven education system that will increase the number of students who complete career pathways, beginning in secondary school and culminating in valuable post-secondary credentials.
- Defining High Quality Credentials that will place equal importance on industry recognized credentials and create a definition for high quality that is based on sector-demand and self-sustaining wage data.
- Determining the Criteria for Progressive Pathways to establish a threshold definition of a career pathway program that promotes a common understanding of quality pathways and systems, while aligning to existing definitions, plans and guidelines.
- Creating “60 by 25” Communities and P-20 Regional Networks, which are community and regional collaborations 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).
- Sector-based Job Training and Economic Development/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) pilot project involving 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 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.
- Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) pilot projects and career pathway initiatives for individuals with disabilities will be supported by core and required partners.
- Commerce will support awareness of best and promising practices for local staff and will provide technical assistance to foster their integration into the regular WIOA local workflow.
- The Service Integration Policy Work Group is modeling resource leveraging by building on the Illinois Department of Human Services Rehabilitation Services 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 how to expand career pathway approaches that can be implemented through regional sector partnerships and other regional sector initiatives. Policy recommendations, professional development and technical assistance will be 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 that 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 initiatives that promote sector-based pre-bridge, bridge programs and integrated education and training models that expand access and increase 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 partners have begun to revisit this definition and other policies to ensure that it aligns with current employer and workforce readiness needs, with the newly developed career pathway definition, as well as with common measures described in the Alliance for Quality Career Pathways. 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 looks to expand opportunities for individuals, including those who lack basic literacy, English and foundational skills necessary to access in-demand employment. The ICCB will continue to engage core and required partners in the strategic planning process, as well as work closely with them to re-examine the bridge definition to ensure its connection to the statewide definition of career pathways.

*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 Youth 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 pathway for out-of-school youth through the blending of federal and state funding;
- Supporting education efforts to design and implement rigorous, demand-driven education systems that will increase career pathway curriculum in secondary settings;
- 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 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.
- 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*

With increased attention given to various forms of work-based learning, apprenticeships are expected to become more common as WIOA is implemented. The Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeships and Pathways (WRAP) Committee of The Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth will continue to coordinate the pathways and apprenticeship activities of workforce, education and economic development agencies in Illinois.

The IWIB created an 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. For this purpose, the IWIB created an Apprenticeship Committee in June 2016. This committee will now 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.

Illinois will learn from the best practices from the Apprenticeship USA pilot projects, including the Illinois Manufacturers’ Association Education Foundation Advanced Apprenticeship Consortium project. The expansion apprenticeships will be encouraged and supported with WIOA Statewide Activities funds through the Illinois Talent Pipeline and Youth Career Pathways Programs.

**Strategy 4: Coordinate and Enhance Career Services and Case Management**

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 Interagency Work Group will use this process to develop policy recommendations to the IWIB for implementing integrated and enhanced career services and case management.

*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 labor market information team to provide improved access to career guidance information in 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 Interagency Work Group will establish a case management team, as applicable, to coordinate and support the delivery of enhanced case management services to participants across the core programs and with other partners. This case management team will include local workforce board members, frontline staff and supervisory workforce personnel to create 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.

- Commerce will collaborate with the IWIB Integrated Services Committee, and core 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.

*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 Work Group, will be 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 Work Group 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.

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.

*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 Work Group 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.

**Strategy 5: Expand Employer and Job Seeker Access to Labor Market Information**

The IWIB Information Technology Standing Committee and the Interagency Data Team will collectively 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 Information Technology Standing Committee 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. 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 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.

*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. The ICCB -- 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 soft-skills identified by employers. The Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework 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.

The Interagency Work Group 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 continues to make Illinois workNet even more user-friendly and work with other state agencies to share similar information. This will be accomplished in collaboration with the policy process being put into place to ensure that systems are in line with and supporting the implementation of policy. Commerce will make ETPLs available on the Illinois workNet web portal, along with provider performance and return on investment information for students and jobseekers.

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

Labor market and career information is 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: Improve Public-Private Data Infrastructure**

The Interagency Data Team, in cooperation with the Interagency Work Group, 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.

*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.

*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 newly formed 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.

**B. Alignment with Activities outside the Plan**

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

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 among core and required partners.

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 in the alignment of the workforce development system, including employment, training, education, human services and other programs, including Registered Apprenticeships and career and technical education. The Interagency Work Group 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, including the economic development arm of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce).

The IWIB and the Interagency Work Group will 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. Illinois will continue with the strategy of coordinating regional planning meetings which included partner program staff from each Economic Development Region (EDR). The purpose of the initial regional meetings was to learn about 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. 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) are all actively engaged in development of guidelines and the coordinated review process of the regional / local plans, Memorandums of Understanding (MOU), and budgets outlining the local infrastructure and shared costs.

*Alignment with Employment and Training*

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 Vermillion 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 Governor Rauner and the State Legislature that recommended actionable steps to address barriers to competitive employment and economic opportunity for persons with disabilities. The EEOPD was the result of Illinois becoming an "Employment First" state with the objective of ensuring that people with disabilities are given the option to engage in integrated, competitive employment at or above minimum wage.

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 AA (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20AA%20--%20Employment%20and%20Economic%20Opportunity%20for%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities%20Recommendations%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, cyber-security, business services and transportation.

#### *Alignment with Education*

Fundamental into the regional planning process is the promotion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships that will 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 Career and Technical Education) are part of the team that will coordinate these efforts at the state, regional and local levels. In addition, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Board of Higher Education are a part of the Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeships and Pathways (WRAP) Committee's Working Group that is coordinating efforts for customizing career pathway best practices. 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.) 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 lead 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.

*Alignment with Human Services and Other Programs*

WIOA core and required partners will continue to educate and train local staff on a continuous basis on the available programs and services. 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. The state is also working to develop a common definition of services among core and required program partners, which will be a key component to the alignment of programs and activities. Additionally, the Interagency Work Group, as part of the Workforce Academy, will establish a case management team to coordinate and support the delivery of enhanced case management services to participants across the core programs and with other partners. The case management team will also focus on potential coordination and co-enrollment strategies that increase communication between the partners and avoid duplication and delay.

Illinois will expand pilot programs that are successful in coordinating services with Human Services programs including the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) and the Employment Opportunities, Personalized Services, Individualized Training, Career Planning (EPIC) pilot program.

- Illinois is coordinating resources among agency partners and providers to address the barriers to employment for people with disabilities. DEI is a multi-year project jointly funded by the United States Department of Labor’s (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and Office of Disability Employment Policy, with the goal of testing pilot strategies to improve outcomes for jobs seekers with disabilities. Illinois’ Round V DEI project aligns the workforce system with secondary and post-secondary education to deliver seamless Information Technology Career Pathway services to persons with disabilities during the initial period of this WIOA plan.
- EPIC is a pilot program with the Illinois Department of Human Services and Illinois Department of Commerce. The program is designed to provide basic and technical skill training and work experience for individuals that are Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD). Participants 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. This pilot is assisting underemployed and unemployed SNAP recipients in five regions across the State of Illinois and is part of a national study that includes an evaluation process to create strategies to implement with the existing SNAP employment and training program. The goal is to help participants get good career pathway jobs, increase earnings and reduce reliance on public assistance. EPIC is funded through the US Department of Agriculture and many individuals in the program are co-enrolled in WIOA for wrap-around services. This strategy represents purposeful service integration with braiding of funding across multiple programs each housed in separate State agencies and multiple LWIAs.

**C. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals**

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services to individuals including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B). The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

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 Work Group is creating a framework that will address these critical issues.

*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 Interagency Work Group to develop and recommend policy to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) regarding the operational requirements of the Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, including Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the required and optional partners. The Governor's Guidelines require the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIA) to describe the services that will be provided to individuals and how the services will be coordinated by the required and optional partners.

The Governor's Guidelines were revised upon the issuance of the WIOA Final Rules. Additionally, two rounds of supplemental guidance to the Governor's Guidelines were issued in response to other forms of federal guidance. An MOU approved by the Interagency Work Group is one of the prerequisites for obtaining one-stop certification.

*One-Stop Certification*

A group of 45 workforce system stakeholders from the State and local levels, including Board members, met for four months to develop a one-stop certification policy, process and application. The certification framework they recommended to the IWIB addressed 41 criteria in 19 areas addressing center effectiveness, accessibility & infrastructure and continuous improvement. The work group's recommendations were adopted by the IWIB and technical assistance was made available to those local boards seeking guidance. In early 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. This policy work group will continue to meet to frame recommendations to the IWIB for strengthening this policy.

*Labor Market Information & Illinois Pathways*

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 Pathways uses these data to provide individuals with research groupings of careers, LMI and the knowledge, skills, abilities and credentials that are required for each occupation. Through partnerships between the State of Illinois' education and economic development agencies, Illinois Pathways supports local programs that empower students of all ages to explore their academic and career interests. 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, 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. Several of the core and required program partners collaborated throughout the state and participated in the Customer Centered Design Challenge. 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. The challenge taken on by the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) team members was to identify "How might we better assist formerly incarcerated individuals obtain employment, education, develop healthy relationships and make positive decisions?" The team conducted focus groups and interviews with multiple stakeholders within the re-entry population consisting of job seekers, those currently employed, community organizations and support systems such as family members. It was determined that, while Comprehensive One-Stop Centers offer the services and resources requested, very few stakeholders were aware of the services available. To address this issue, it was concluded that methods of outreach must be improved, and resources should be made available through on-line avenues such as social media, partner web pages and informational videos in resource rooms. Identifying the needs of our customers allows all core partners to collaboratively and simultaneously address the problem of misinformation and lack of information in the re-entry community. The platform of waiting rooms, web pages, and social media will be areas of initial emphasis.

*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 and implementing the best practices of the current and future Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Projects. 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 skill 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 foster youth employment and training programs including youth who are aging out of the foster care system. Commerce and Department of 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.
- 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.

#### **D. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers**

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Under the strategic direction of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (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-%20IL%20Integrated%20Business%20Services%20Scan%20Report%20Final.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 that engage in business services in most of the local areas across the state that are all co-located in a local workforce center. Employment Security Business Services Managers and Coordinators work with all companies to provide job matching services while IDES' Veterans' Employment Representatives work specifically with businesses on behalf of veterans, as well as Disabled Veterans' Employment Representatives who work on behalf of veterans with disabilities.
- The Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) employs state agency staff that engage in business services in many of the local areas across the state. DRS Employment Resource Specialists (ERS) are specifically charged with engaging with businesses for the purpose of understanding their current and future needs and matching those with clients. They also work to foster an ongoing relationship with business customers to ensure consistent support and services. ERS can 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.
- In most cases, Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Adult Education does not provide services directly to businesses, those services are provided by local staff in community colleges and other providers. Those services are coordinated through Workforce 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). 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. of 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*

The 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 initiative. 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 more nimble and 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;
- Development of employer-centric performance measures and dashboard tools;
- Back-mapping of talent flows for critical jobs in key sectors; and
- Alignment of public and private incentives in states or regions.

Working together and with Vermilion Advantage, this team is currently conducting 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 have 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 lessons learned from the Workforce Innovation Fund (ATIM), Unified Business Services Analysis and the Talent Pipeline Management will inform the development of the Integrated Business Services Implementation Plans.

#### **E. Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions**

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).

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 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, 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 integrally tie education to workforce development. This is evident in the ICCB’s Workforce Education Strategic 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 create a job-driven education and training system, 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, 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. 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.

#### *Coordination with Core Programs*

The ICCB, in partnership with 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 2016 DRS served 1,750 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 doubled 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.**

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's other education and training providers, including providers on the state's eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

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 Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth, the Illinois Community College Board, State Board of Education and the Board of Higher Education 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 plans to bring stakeholders together to further align the education and workforce systems by cross-walking respective plans and embedding the common threads in each.

- *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 by Governor Rauner 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.
- *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 objective 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.

- *Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeships and Pathways (WRAP) Committee of The Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth:* The WRAP Committee is a cross-agency team representing education (both secondary and postsecondary), workforce, human services, commerce and information technology among others. The focus of this Committee is to enable youth transitioning out of secondary education to be informed and prepared to make decisions about their postsecondary education and career options. This is done by enhancing access to information about opportunities, scaling promising practices statewide and ensuring alignment across initiatives. Given the number of statewide initiatives in this area, including those mentioned above, the committee's approach is to connect these initiatives through a shared career pathway framework and develop joint policy and implementation strategies that can be used across initiatives.
- *National Governors Association (NGA) Work-Based Learning Policy Academy:* In 2017, Illinois was invited to participate in the NGA's Work-Based Learning Policy Academy, which centers on scaling work-based learning opportunities across the state. Illinois is using this opportunity to build on the work of the WRAP project, to develop a "brand" for the cohesive career pathway work and to launch a public campaign to inform Illinoisans of the many valuable work-based learning opportunities across the state.
- *Illinois' Workforce Innovation Award - Job-Driven Best Practices:* The IWIB and core partners recognize work-based learning as a key strategy that provides more opportunities for workers to earn income while gaining critical job skills. Illinois' Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing (ATIM) Program was a Workforce Innovation Fund project that was administered in partnership with Commerce, Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security), ICCB and the Illinois Manufacturing Association to implement strategies that were designed to accelerate service delivery and results. Nearly all the strategies under ATIM involved employers working with community colleges and other private training providers to create a manufacturing-focused, job-driven education and training system in the region. The ATIM program design emphasized that, regardless of funding source, it is critical for training programs to: 1) be demand-driven based on labor market information, employer projections and employer-identified skills; 2) lead to industry-recognized credentials or degrees; and 3) be able to accelerate time to earnings and full worker productivity through a variety of strategies.

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**

Describe how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E).

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 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.

### **Improving Access to Post-Secondary Credentials**

Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

A key to robust career pathways is that portable, stackable credentials are incorporated fully into the system, particularly at the post-secondary level. Fortunately, in Illinois, the commitment of the post-secondary 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 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 in the 2018-19 school year.

The Illinois ESSA Plan identifies three areas within its school quality framework for which stakeholders will provide recommendations to ISBE: Preschool to Second Indicator, an Elementary/Middle Level Indicator 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. ISBE posted the recommendations for public comment until February 16, 2018. In addition, the Technical Advisory Council is developing recommendations for the performance levels and growth indicator in the accountability system.

#### *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 by Governor Bruce Rauner 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 is 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 jointly establish a phased implementation plan and benchmarks that lead to full statewide implementation of transitional mathematics instruction in all school districts, with timeframes that account for State and local resources and capacity. Scaling will occur over the next 4-5 years. Currently, approximately 70% of the community college districts in Illinois are implementing a transitional math model with partner high schools or plan to launch a program during the 18-19 school year. Currently, approximately 30% of Illinois high schools are implementing transitional math or plan to launch a program during the 18-19 school year.

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. This provides State support to match local resources for regional pathways system development, and to address articulation of endorsement programs into postsecondary degree programs. 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, have launched public-private sector-based committees to recommend a sequence of minimum career competencies for particular occupational pathways. These competencies can be used to inform pathways course sequencing, course content and the focus of work-based learning experiences. The committees for four areas (Finance and Business Services, Health Sciences, IT, and Manufacturing/Engineering) are finalizing competencies for state agency consideration and adoption by June 2018. Additional committees are being formed for other occupational areas.

*Common Career Pathway Program Information Initiative*

The Common Career Pathway Program Information Initiative will improve access to recognized postsecondary credentials by enhancing the types of information available about these programs and by establishing mechanisms for disseminating the information to a broader audience. Currently, the administrative systems for capturing information on workforce training, community college certification, and private business and vocational programs do not collect sufficient information addressing the elements of high-quality career pathway programs. This initiative will standardize the information collected across programs in categories aligned to the State's career pathway definition, such as Partnerships, Sector & Occupational Focus, Industry-Recognized Credentials, Career-Focused Instruction, Work-Based Learning, and Participant Supports. The initiative will also address how quality and more complete information about these programs is shared across multiple platforms to reach potential participants and their advisors, as well as policymakers, funders, and system administrators.

*Early College Credit*

Though other avenues for early college credit exist (e.g., Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate), the primary focus of the early college portion of this project has been on dual 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 (FY2016), nearly 55,000 students participated, taking over 100,000 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 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 IV 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 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 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 Jobs for the Future initiative "Accelerating Opportunity (AO)." This initiative focuses on a blending of both Adult Education and CTE instruction to provide an integrated model of instruction using a team teaching approach. 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 twenty-five. 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 Registered 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 Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (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 affective. 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 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 apprenticeship in their organization or region and the benefits and costs of doing so. At the regional roundtables, participants were greeted with a video of Governor Rauner asking for their commitment to foster apprenticeship opportunities.

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.

The Apprenticeship Committee used National Apprenticeship Week as another opportunity to reach businesses, associations, schools and potential apprentices to educate on how to create programs and promote existing opportunities. The Governor issued a proclamation and many events were held around the State, each of which was marketed and promoted by the Committee. The Apprenticeship Committee and the Illinois Workforce Partnership (IWP) jointly hosted an event, “Apprenticeship: A New Vision,” on November 15, 2017 at Parkland College in Champaign, Illinois. Approximately 100 people attended, representing 18 different community colleges, 17 workforce development agencies, nine private sector businesses and many others, including community organizations, K-12 education and state agencies.

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.**

#### **I. Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies**

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies and activities in the State.

##### *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.

*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. 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. It is vital that local economic development staff have the most current macro-level data, but also work with us to share micro-level data and the vision they have for their communities. 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.

*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**

The Unified State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in Section II Strategic Elements.

**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 Governor Rauner's 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. 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.

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 did not appear to be retirement of the existing systems but rather creating an interface that could connect the systems. 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.

Additionally, the IWIB is in the process of establishing an Information Technology Standing Committee to support the IWIB's priorities including: 1) developing methodologies to assess employer needs and speed response times; 2) expanding 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) contributing to the sustainability of technology strategies to support IWIB objectives and all Illinois Workforce Development partners. Key to the implementation of this third priority will be the use of the Information Technology Standing Committee to connect the IWIB to technology-related activities going on outside of the workforce development system that could impact the activities of the IWIB. Of particular importance will be the coordination of IWIB strategies with the work of DoIT and the Interagency Data Team to ensure the alignment of technology and data systems across required partner programs in Illinois.

The following are the current Illinois WIOA systems in use. Each of these systems have 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.

*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 more than 80 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 in state. 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 benefit program for the State of Illinois. Claimants can file their claims and file for their weekly benefits through a variety of methods: online, through an Interactive Voice Response System, over the telephone with a call center agent or in person. The system keeps track of correspondence 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 Act (TRA) for impacted workers.

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 starting 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.

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.

#### *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 which 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.

DHS –TANF staff has developed and maintained a relationship with several employers throughout the Chicago and Suburban areas. Employers are invited to the Family Community Resource Centers (Local DHS Offices) to do presentations as a form of job recruitment (e.g., UPS, Fed-Ex and some manufacturing companies). DHS is in the planning stages with the one-stop centers to host an upcoming career fair. This will be an on-going initiative as part of a collaborative effort to continue compliance for service integration per WIOA guidelines. A list of over forty employment agencies is connected to DHS-TANF Program. Some employment opportunities range from temporary part-time assignment to permanent positions. Many customers have been hired as a result of this partnership.

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 Database 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. ILDS specialists work closely with the WIOA state agencies, partners and the IWIB to assist in research and in improving availability of intelligent and reliable combined program trends and outcomes that enable the state to make data-driven decisions.
- The Illinois workNet Portal site was launched in 2005 by the IWIB and is sponsored by the Illinois Department of Commerce. 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. One example of this usage is the Employment Opportunities, Personalized Services, Individualized Training and Career Planning program (EPIC), which is overseen by the Illinois Department of Human Services and focuses on expediting SNAP and TANF clients into WIOA training and career advancement. 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 establish an online WIOA ePolicy site and host weekly WIOA Wednesday webinars to involve and inform state stakeholders. This state asset will continue to build on the collaborative capabilities of the portal and encourages the state workforce and educational institutions to engage and explore new ways to combine efforts and data to create a seamless experience for the customer.
- Commerce is in the process of developing a new layoff intake and tracking tool 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.

1. The State operating systems that will support the implementation of the State's strategies. This must include a description of—

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 Illinois Longitudinal Data System continues to utilize its fully executed 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 establishes 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).

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 the 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. To help prepare for and explore options for data integration, an interagency performance subgroup of the Interagency Work Group is focused on performance accountability and data integration. 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 are establishing the methodology for effectiveness of serving employers as 1) Retention with the same employer, and 2) Employer Penetration Rate. This was approved by the IWIB on September 21, 2017.

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.

2. The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies (e.g., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes where appropriate). In addition, describe the State's process for developing guidelines for State-administered one-stop partner programs' contributions to a one-stop delivery system, including benchmarks, and its guidance to assist local boards, chief elected officials, and local one-stop partners in determining equitable and stable methods of funding infrastructure in accordance with sec. 121(h)(1)(B). Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, the State must also include such guidelines.

## **2. State of Illinois Policies**

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), along with Illinois' core agency partners who make up the Interagency Work Group, have developed and adopted 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

Beginning in October 2016, the IWIB adopted a new, highly collaborative policy development process to address policies with systemwide implications, such as one-stop certification and service integration. Because of 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, 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.

One example of the effectiveness of this new policy development approach is the IWIB's One-Stop Certification Policy Work Group. As the first policy-making effort using the new process, a group of 45 workforce system stakeholders from the state and local levels, including Board members, met for four months to develop a one-stop certification policy, process and application. The certification framework they recommended to the IWIB addressed 41 criteria in 19 areas addressing center effectiveness, accessibility & infrastructure, and continuous improvement. The work group's recommendations were adopted by the IWIB and were implemented statewide in July 2017. The IWIB One-Stop Certification Policy Work Group reconvened in January 2018 to review the results of the certification process. Additionally, potential refinements to the policy were identified, as were improvement opportunities and notable practices for Illinois' network of one-stop centers. This policy work group will continue to meet to frame recommendations to the IWIB for strengthening this policy. This is an important WIOA policy that provides guidance to the local boards and program administrators regarding the requirements of the American Job Centers (Attachment U) (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/DownloadPrint/Attachment%20U%20-%20Policy%20Documents.pdf>).

Another important policy work group that has been launched under this new policy development process is the IWIB Service Integration Work Group. As a foundational element of Illinois' Unified State Plan and the IWIB's 2017 Strategic Plan, service integration is a way to link and leverage scarce resources and improve customer outcomes. This policy work group is 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 Service Integration Policy Work Group has adopted a model of service integration that moves through five stages: isolation, communication, coordination, collaboration and integration. The work group recently 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 outreach and intake; assessment; career services; case management; follow-along services; business engagement; and marketing, branding & messaging. The work group is exploring the development of an assessment tool that will enable each one-stop center to evaluate its level of integration across all seven core functions and use those results to develop an improvement plan. The policy development process described above for one-stop certification and service integration requires a significant investment of time and resources. The same policy creation principles were followed in the development of program specific policies.

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 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 six core functions for service integration. Three sub-workgroups formed around the six core functions will be exploring policy and practice best practices to put in place to achieve service integration

As part of policy development, guidance and technical assistance, Illinois created 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. 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 Work Group:

- The IWIB continues to utilize the approved new procedures for communications between the board, its Executive Committee and the Interagency Work Group – 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. Specifically, this guidance informed the Illinois workforce system how to implement WIOA statutory requirements beginning July 1, 2016. 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.
- Under a work group structure, Illinois developed new 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 assures 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 and certification 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.
- 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 LWIAs 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 LWIAs 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 ensure preference to veterans is provided over non-veterans who might otherwise be determined eligible under a program.
- 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. Discussion also centered around 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 the past two years, the IWIB has 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. The work group would continue to review current data and information and finalize the language in these areas, as well as address policy components related to incentives and sanctions. They will also review the Hold-Harmless Clause at their September 2018 board meeting.
- 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 of funding infrastructure 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 include:

- 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.

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/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20J%20-%20Governors%20Guidelines.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 an Evaluation and Accountability 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 policy makers and other IWIB committees in establishing standards and metrics to assess and continuously improve system and program performance.

**3. State Program and State Board Overview**

**A. State Agency Organization**

Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

### **3. State Program and State Board Overview**

#### **A. State Agency Organization**

Organizational charts for each of the core partners are available at: <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Pages/StateUnifiedPlan.aspx>

#### **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. A primary focus of Commerce 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;
- **Employment and Training:** Oversees statewide workforce training system, and promotes and coordinates initiatives to bridge skills gaps;
- **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;
- **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;
- **Regional Economic Development:** Integrates economic development activities and outreach across the state;
- **Energy and Recycling:** Promotes investment in Illinois' green economy, as well as create energy and recycling policies for state facilities;
- **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;
- **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;

- **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 thrive in Illinois. The Office of Employment and Training (OET) oversees the administration of 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 and Technical Assistance. In 2017, OET expanded the technical assistance unit and designated staff to support state workforce board activities as a primary function.

*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 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 lease holder, Employment Security will then work with the Illinois Department 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**

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 which 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 which 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 (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 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.

*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 3,000 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 3,500 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.

Before the passage of WIOA, Illinois’ Employment First Act 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 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**

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

i. Membership Roster

Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members’ organizational affiliations.

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 Sean McCarthy, Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Table 13 outlines the membership roster for the State Board, including members’ organizational affiliations.

**Table 13: Illinois Workforce Innovation Board Membership Roster**

Last Name	First Name	Entity	
Rauner	Governor Bruce	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	
Battaglia	Kevin	Battaglia Industries	Appointed Business Members  58%
Beards	Henry	United Parcel Service	
Conley	Mike	Trenton Sun	
Daidsmeyer	Christopher "C.D."	Illinois Road Contractors, Inc.; Illinois House of Representatives, 100 <sup>th</sup> District	
Day	Debra	Aetna Better Health - IL	
Fabijanski	Pat	Hyatt - McCormick Place	
Ferrari	Daniele	ITC, Inc	
Forbes	Joe	Versatech	
Friedman	David	AutonomyWorks	
Gadberry	Kirk	North American Lighting	
Hacker	Thomas	C&L Supreme	

**ILLINOIS WIOA UNIFIED PLAN  
MODIFICATION**

**3/15/18**

Jones	Grailing	SchneiderNational, Inc.	
Mason	Angela	Chicago Botanic Garden	
Massie	Michael	Massie & Quick, LLC	
McClinton	Marlon	Utilivate Technologies, LLC	
Nain	Sandeep	Sntial Technologies, Inc.	
Rico	John	Rico Enterprises	
Schiemann	Margi	Nicor Gas	
Tennant	Aaron	Total Solutions, Inc.	
Warrington	Andrew	United Conveyer	
Webb	Grover	Tanglefoot Ranch	
Aranda-Suh	Elba	National Latino Education Institute	Appointed Workforce & Labor Members 22%
Dickson	Victor	Safer Foundation	
Oischlager	Barbara	Lake County Vocational System	
Payne	Terri	AFL-CIO	
Perry	Michael	AFSCME Council 31	
Salazar	Eloy	Illinois Migrant Council	
Wendorf	Thomas	DuPage Impact	
Wilkerson	Terry	Rend Lake College	
Ashby	Tom	Mayor of Centralia; Coordinated Transportation Development, Inc.	Appointed Representatives of Government
Foster	Jennifer	Illinois Community College Board	
Mays	Jeffrey	Illinois Department of Employment Security	
McCarthy	Sean	Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity	
Wade	Quinetta	Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services	
Walsh	Larry	Will County Executive	
Wetzel	Sylvia	Kane County	Other Appointed Representatives of Government
Bowman	Dr. Al	Illinois Board of Higher Education	

Dimas	James	Illinois Department of Human Services	Ex-Officio, Non-Voting Members
Durham	Dr. Brian	Illinois Community College Board	
Furlan	Pam	Illinois Workforce Partnership	
Hunter-Anderson	Dr. Karen	Illinois Community College Board	
Smith	Tony	Illinois State Board of Education	

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 workforce professionals from across the state who 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 same individuals represent their local workforce boards as staff. 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.

**ii. Board Activities**

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

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 I (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20I%20-%20Interagency%20Team%20Members.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. Standing committees are facilitated by staff to the board and other supporting entities.

- *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 law, as appropriate;
  - Periodically reviewing the IWIB by-laws and making recommendations for amendments as appropriate;
  - Outreach and recruitment of businesses members;
  - Education and outreach to congressional members and state legislators;
  - Ensuring state education initiatives are aligned and connected to the state workforce system;
  - 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.

- *Evaluation and Accountability Committee (EAC)*: The EAC has been assigned to identify the needs of 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. If additional measures of performance are identified, the EAC will also provide oversight of those. The efforts of the EAC are not to conduct monitoring of the regional and local workforce systems, rather the intent of the EAC 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 conduct all necessary research, assist with research of available data and information, facilitate all meetings of the committee, and prepare documents for the full board that outline their recommendations for continuous improvement.

The development of continuous improvement systems will be led by the EAC, the Interagency Work Group (including specialized assistance from the Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) Interagency Data Team that includes experts in labor market information and performance data), and the Integrated Business Services Workgroup. The IWIB will also continue to work with the Interagency Work Group to identify and disseminate best practice information. A key continuous improvement activity is the Wednesday Webinars that are open to all IWIB members, core partners, required partners and local areas that cover best practice and coordination opportunities.

- *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 occurring 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 life learning and will include life skills provided by the community college system to prepare the individuals as they return to the general public, and focused job skills training 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 build on these efforts by expanding 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 employment exchange services. The Apprenticeship Committee has created a plan for the IWIB that establishes a comprehensive and integrated apprenticeship system in Illinois, oversees its implementation and performance and recommends improvements. 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

The committee developed a framework known as Apprenticeship Plus in Illinois. While recognizing the global understanding of registered apprenticeships, the Apprenticeship Plus model expands this very successful model to address the youth population through Youth Apprenticeships, prepares all populations through Pre-Apprenticeships, and widens the scope to consider all work-based learning models as a means to prepare individuals with the new skills they need to succeed in the workforce through a career and not just a job. These “learn and earn” models are widely accepted by businesses as efficient and effective means to meet their talent needs. Working closely with The Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth, this committee assists in development of best practice models in registered apprenticeships, youth apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeships and work-based learning models of providing training and education across the state.

- *Information Technology Standing Committee* – WIOA requires that the state workforce boards develop strategies for technological improvements to facilitate access to, and improve the quality of, services and activities provided through the one-stop delivery system. The IWIB established an Information Technology Standing Committee to support this function and the implementation of the identified strategies within the IWIB Strategic Plan. These priorities include: 1) the development of methodologies to assess employer needs and speed response times (Priority Activity 1.1); 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 (Priority Activity 2.2); and 3) contribute to the sustainability of technology strategies to support objectives across all IWIB goal areas and all Illinois Workforce Development partners (Priority Activity 3.1).

Furthermore, technology needs will be supported by the Evaluation and Accountability Committee, DoIT and the Interagency Data Team that will create a framework of the data elements and requirements that are key inputs for the alignment of technology and data systems across required partner programs in Illinois. This is a critical activity that is required for the IWIB to effectively evaluate and identify continuous improvement opportunities in the effectiveness and efficiency of Illinois’ workforce development system. It is an assurance that technology is accessible to individuals with disabilities and those residing in remote areas.

#### *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. The IWIB had two Task Forces operating in the past two years, Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDL) and Strategic Planning. Examples of previous task forces include those focused on disadvantaged youth, healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, and individuals with disabilities.

- *Strategic Planning* – Suffused throughout the modifications to Illinois’ Unified State Plan are elements of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board’s Strategic Plan. Convened for the initial time in December 2016, the Task Force set out to create a vision for the board that signified the intent to structurally change the way the IWIB conducts business. While ambitious, the IWIB’s intent is to continuously improve in every way possible the impact they have on businesses and the workforce throughout Illinois. Ensuring stronger business engagement in all consultation, data & reporting, and performance metrics will ensure the needs of businesses are captured and responded to appropriately.

- *Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDL)* – This Task Force met from 2016 into 2017 to hold discussions to identify conditions that have led Illinois and the nation to experience a considerable shortage of truck drivers, including a high turnover rate among this profession. The ultimate goal of the Task Force’s work will be to increase the number of CDLs in Illinois to support industry cluster growth and drive overall economic growth. Its directive was to develop action models and best practices designed to be employer-led (with the support and collaboration of industry influencers) and to increase the number of commercial truck drivers in the state.

In September 2017, the Task Force submitted a final report that outlined nine task force recommendations. These were presented as much to the trucking industry for their consideration as they were for the IWIB members. The recommendations request certain actions be taken by business leaders in the industry and included strategies for better driver retention, outreach activities to recruit new applicants, expansion of new training models within the industry (and of available slots within those training programs), and the collection of additional data and metrics to better capture truck driving trends. The board approved the report and recognized the magnitude of the problems within this segment of the industry. As the work of the Task Force was completed, several of its members have agreed to continue to meet regularly to research and review the steps the industry takes as a result of their recommendations.

#### *Work Groups*

The development of policies that are critical to the implementation of WIOA provisions occur 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 Workforce Report Development* – The IWIB is supported by the Executive Committee, Interagency Work Group 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 Work Group. The annual report is developed using the same approach and activities. The IWIB will be supported by the agencies responsible for administering the core and required program to implement the Unified State Plan.
- *Service Integration* – The development and review of statewide policies affecting the coordinated provision of services through the state’s one-stop delivery system will be supported by the work of the Executive Committee, the Evaluation and Accountability Committee, and the Interagency Work Group. The cross-agency policy development process outlined above is an example of how policies will be researched, developed, drafted and reviewed by the IWIB.
- *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 early 2018, the policy work group will convene again to review the past certification process and identify best practices that local boards utilized, as well as expand the policy to require that all affiliate and specialized centers be certified.

- In order to ensure all necessary one-stop centers in Illinois achieve the required level of certification described in WIOA, Illinois has 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 affective provision of services to customers entering the local system whether at a physical location or via technology may be dependent on the identification of centers appropriately.
- Finally, the board continues to revise its policy requiring a minimum level of Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funds are expended on direct training activities. In addition to increasing the minimum level from forty to fifty percent (50%), the board further defined what it would consider as direct training and combined the formula beginning in Program year 2017 to be a combined calculation of these funding streams rather than independent. In 2018, the board will continue to review data and information to finalize the formula and consider the inclusion of other funding sources in the calculation. Primary considerations are that there should not be 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 is focused on identifying final revisions to the policy to be implemented for the Program Year 2018 funding and planning decisions.

#### **4. Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners**

##### **A. Assessment of Core Programs**

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

The Governor, General Assembly, Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) and state agency partners continuously assesses 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 assesses 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 focused on coordinating 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. The subgroup has transitioned to the IWIB Evaluation and Accountability Committee, focusing on ensuring that WIOA performance accountability measures, as well as other statutorily required evaluation and accountability activities, are properly implemented and reported.

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.

Under the provisions of WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy – 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 approximately 90 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.

Review procedures and processes were created by ICCB Adult Education staff and sent to the LWIBs. Each LWIB appointed an individual (designee) to oversee and conduct the review process based on the criteria established by ICCB. The completed review instrument was then submitted to ICCB. ICCB staff identified areas that needed guidance in each LWIA and is working with LWIBs to address the issues.

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.” A standardized indicator is to be established and implemented no later than the beginning of Program Year 2019. 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 has also established an interagency workgroup – including representatives from all of the WIOA core partners – to review the regional & local plans, memoranda of understanding, and cost sharing agreements to ensure that local areas submit documents that are complete, compliant and committed to the integration of required programs under WIOA. Illinois is a leader in the development of regional and local planning documents that were established for WIOA Program Year 2016 and updated in Program Year 2017. This provided each of the core partner agencies an opportunity to assess each of the 10 regions and 22 workforce areas in Illinois. The core partners will work with the IWIB Committees and workgroups to update the planning guidelines that will require information to assess the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of the partner programs.

As discussed within the policy section, the IWIB, in cooperation with the Interagency Work Group, 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 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.

Illinois will continue to track and analyze each LWIAs 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. A workgroup is analyzing what is included in the direct training expenditure rate and recommending revisions to the policy accordingly. 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 Evaluation and Accountability Committee (EAC) 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 one stop centers are providing the most effective and efficient services to its customers.

**B. Assessment of One-Stop Program Partner Programs**

Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

The Governor, the General Assembly, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) and state agency partners continuously assesses 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 subgroup has transitioned to the IWIB Evaluation and Accountability Committee, focusing on ensuring WIOA performance accountability measures, as well as other statutorily required evaluation and accountability activities are properly implemented and reported.

The core programs will continue to work 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.

Illinois has also established an interagency workgroup including representatives from all of the WIOA core partners to review the regional & local plans, memoranda of understanding, and cost sharing agreements to ensure that local areas submit documents that are complete, compliant and committed to the integration of required programs under WIOA. Illinois is a leader in the development of regional and local planning documents that were established for WIOA Program Year 2016 and updated in Program Year 2017. This provided each of the core partner agencies an opportunity to assess each of the 10 regions and 22 workforce areas in Illinois. The core partners will work with the IWIB Committees and workgroups to update the planning guidelines that will require information to assess the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of the one-stop program partners. This primarily will be a function of the EAC and will assist them 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 Work Group, 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**

Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

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 will be evaluated to determine necessary revisions to the current policy.

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.

Illinois has 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. The first, an informal process in early 2016, allowed the separate calculations for the adult and dislocated programs to be combined into a single calculation. In December 2016, revisions to the list of calculable direct training programs and services were made. Both changes were reflected in written policy changes issued in December 2016. In September 2017, the third set of changes were made. These were relative to an increase in the minimum expenditure rate to 50%, and application of a "hold-harmless" clause (which was amended to ensure this provision will be revisited by the IWIB at their September 2018 meeting) and the potential waiver of sanctions related to an approved hold-harmless request by a local board. This final set of changes will be implemented upon completion of a consultation process of the policy work group.

In 2017 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.

The IWIB will continue to review the data utilized in calculating the minimum expenditure rate as a tool to identify its effectiveness in serving customers and meeting the needs of businesses. Recognizing that the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act focuses strongly on providing businesses with skilled workers that meet their needs, Illinois wants to ensure all local workforce boards are focusing on the need to train the workforce appropriately.

Illinois received the final impact analysis of the Workforce Innovation Fund project in 2017. Our multi-regional project began in 2013 in coordination with the Departments of Commerce and Employment Security, the Illinois Community College Board, the Illinois Pathways Manufacturing Learning Exchange and several workforce areas in Illinois. The evaluation highlighted the effectiveness of several innovative (at-the-time) practices such as: 1) enhanced, cross-agency case management; 2) experiential learning through paid internships and on-the-job training; 3) training for clear career pathways through industry-recognized credentials; 4) accelerated time to earnings; 5) leveraging existing, transferable skills; and 6) the use of lean principles to minimize downtime and activities not determined as value-added. The impact analysis compared outcomes for treatment and control groups and found:

- Entering credential-based training - the treatment group was 72 percentage points higher than the control group;
- Successful completion rate - the treatment group was 52 percentage points higher than the control group;
- Industry recognized credential attainment - the treatment group was 55 percentage points higher than the control group; and,
- Annual wages 2 years after random assignment - the treatment group wages were 25 percent higher than the control group.

Some of the program design elements from our project, such as the emphasis on integrated client services and work-based learning were embedded into WIOA through subsequent guidance. The project assessment provides clear evidence these practices are more effective and lead to improved outcomes. The results of these assessment will be considered as Illinois continues to update WIOA policy, planning and one-stop certification requirements.

#### **D. Evaluation**

Describe how the state will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA

The Evaluation and Accountability Committee (EAC) will take the lead in determining appropriate actions and recommendations to the IWIB regarding the design and evaluation and research projects. In addition to the Benchmark Report, the EAC 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 EAC will also 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.

Current policies that provide immediate opportunities to assess results are the minimum training expenditure requirement and the one-stop center certification. The IWIB recently approved an increase in the minimum training requirement that at least 50% (from 40%) of the 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. Over the next one to two years, the board will evaluate these outcomes, consult with other stakeholders, and identify effects on the workforce, and employment in particular. Additional revisions to the formula for calculating the minimum training expenditure will also 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 IWIB will utilize the information to make recommendations for continuous improvement opportunities by all local boards and operators.

Other examples of how the state is or plans to conduct evaluations and research projects include:

- Upon evaluation of the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services (ES) program participation among Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants, Employment Security concluded that the number of UI claimants registering for Employment Services was not meeting expectations. As a result, the requirement for UI claimants to register for Employment Services was implemented in July 2016. This requirement mandates that UI claimants register and develop a suitable resume in Illinois Job Link. The registration requirement provides Wagner-Peyser Employment Services staff a vehicle to communicate with job seekers in an effort to transition them from unemployment to reemployment.
- In addition to the registration requirement, Employment Security Wagner-Peyser staff have commenced additional outreach efforts to both underserved populations and underserved areas of the state. Wagner-Peyser ES staff in the Southern part of the state have begun outreach efforts to job seekers in counties that have been underserved by the program. Staff collaborated with community service organizations and workforce partners in an effort to reach job seekers who may benefit from Employment Services, but who may never walk into an American Job Center. These efforts also include Wagner-Peyser staff collaborating with the Department of Corrections and other partner staff at the Kewanee Life Skills Center to provide Employment Services to inmates with an approaching release date. Employment Security plans to implement similar outreach efforts to jobseekers throughout all areas of the state.
- The Department of Commerce issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity for Workforce Innovation projects in December 2017. 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 to 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.
- Under the ICCB Adult Education Competitive grant process, core and some required partners were 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.

## **5. Distribution of Funds for Core Programs**

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

### **A. For Title I programs**

For Title I programs, provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

- i. Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3)
- ii. Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3),

**Distribution of Funds-Title I (Adult)**

- iii. Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned.

**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 (Attachment Q) (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20Q%20-%20Methods%20in%20Distributing%20Funds.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. Attachment Q:<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20Q%20-%20%20Medthods%20in%20Distributing%20Funds.pdf>

## **B. For Title II**

### **i. Multi-year grants or contracts**

Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.

ii. Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers

### **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 Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) requirements will continue to receive funding through June 30, 2017, 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 three-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 three years to correspond with the effective period of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Illinois will use a three-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 and 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 will determine the eligible providers that will be awarded funds starting July 1, 2017. The review of proposals will include rating responses of the 13 considerations as in Title II of WIOA as well as the state consideration of making certain the applicants 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 considerations that will be 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 child care 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.

*Timeline*

The following steps will be taken in conducting the AEFLA competition:

<b>Competition Timeline</b>	<b>Activities</b>
January - February	ICCB publishes three-year federal AEFLA Request for Proposals (RFP) 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"> <li>• An open bidder's conference will be held to provide an overview of the competitive RFP.</li> <li>• ICCB provides technical assistance to inquiries from potential eligible providers.</li> <li>• ICCB recruits candidates to review and score AEFLA grant applications.</li> </ul>
February - April	FAQ's 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.

<b>Continuation Plan Timeline</b>	<b>Activities</b>
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"> <li>• Web-ex informational meeting</li> <li>• ICCB provides information to current providers</li> <li>• ICCB organizes the grant reading process</li> </ul>
April	Questions from the web-ex informational meeting will be posted to the ICCB website.
May	Due date for AEFLA grant applications.
May- June	Reviewers review and score AELA grant applications.

<b>Continuation Plan Timeline</b>	<b>Activities</b>
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 Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Through this process, the ICCB will identify, assess and award three-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 or 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 RFP. 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.

Within an APC, the funds are then distributed proportionately among approved eligible providers based on demonstrated performance, previous data, units of 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 measurable 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 to 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) will published and distributed broadly a Competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) in the Spring of FY 2017, 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.

In a continuation year, FY2019-FY2020, 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 continuation of the grant. 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**

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

This is not applicable to the State of Illinois.

**6. Program Data**

**A. Data Alignment and Integration**

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

**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 new established Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator (CDDA). The interagency agreements and the CDDA arrangement establishes 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 allows 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 which 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 Interagency Work Group 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 includes 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.

In order to Coordinate and consult with DoIT regarding ongoing strategies for developing technology solutions across state government, to monitor the progress of DoIT in its efforts to create a single view of the customer, and to ensure the development of an integrated intake system across all WIOA partners (among other objectives) the IWIB will be establishing Information Technology Standing Committee in early 2018. This group will advise on the establishment of sustainable methods for high quality data collection & reporting and contribute to the sustainability of technology strategies to support objectives across all Illinois Workforce Development partners. These strategies are in direct alignment with Strategy 6 laid out earlier in the plan, which aims to improve the public-private data infrastructure.

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) has established an Evaluation and Accountability 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.

In addition, the IWIB intends to establish, in early 2018, an Information Technology Standing Committee that will assist in researching and making decisions regarding issues of data interoperability (including common intake), methodology development that will help to assess employer needs and speed response times, and the use of technologies to 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. The need for a committee such as this was confirmed through the IWIB Strategic Planning process, as the need for assistance with these types of issues were identified across all of the process goal mapping teams.

Through the work of the IWIB Evaluation and Accountability Committee and the IWIB Information Technology Standing Committee, the Interagency Work Group will build on the findings to: (1) develop a state and regional cross-agency benchmark report for stakeholders and the general public, and (2) provide additional regional planning data and tools to further support regional planning to align education, workforce and economic development. Furthermore, the Interagency Work Group 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**

Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

**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 Information 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 interagency 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 from 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 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**

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

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." A standardized indicator is to be established and implemented no later than the beginning of Program Year 2019. 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**

Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 UNITED STATES C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

Privacy Safeguards Incorporated into the Workforce Development System, including Complying with Section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act and other Federal Laws 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.

**7. Priority of Service for Veterans**

Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 UNITED STATES C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.

**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 WIA staff. If during this Initial Assessment, a Veteran self-identifies as having a Significant Barrier to Employment, then they are referred to the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist for possible Intensive Services and Case Management. While in Case Management or as part of the Intensive Services process, 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 with 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 a Veteran to develop job opportunities.

**Table 14: Employment Status of Illinois' Civilian Non-institutional Population 18 Years and Over by Veteran Status**  
January 2016-December 2016 (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		
<b>Veterans</b>	665.2	332.1	49.9%	309.9	22.1	6.7%	333.2
<b>Gulf War Era (I &amp; II) Veterans</b>	198.1	168.1	84.9%	161.2	7.0	4.1%	29.9
<b>Gulf War I Veterans</b>	105.4	91.5	86.8%	89.1	2.4	2.6%	13.9
<b>Gulf War II Veterans</b>	92.6	76.6	82.7%	72.0	4.6	6.0%	16.1
<b>Non-Veterans</b>	9,007.2	6,131.1	68.1%	5,792.3	338.8	5.5%	2,876.2

Source: UNITED STATES Census Bureau, Current Population Survey

For example, the current practice for serving veterans who are ineligible for Veterans Administration Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment services may include a DVOP specialist providing a referral to Vocational Rehabilitation to assess and assist the veteran with mitigating his or her disability in order to meet their employment goal. DVOP's 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 is an online tool used by veterans searching for jobs in Illinois.
- 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.

Veteran's representatives provide services in 13 Illinois correctional facilities. Employment Security coordinates with the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) and the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) to provide employment workshops for inmates 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 face when attempting to re-enter the job market after their release.

The State of Illinois has issued policy addressing the priority of services requirement in serving 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 implement policies and processes. These policies address the provision of services regardless of the method of receipt, whether it be in 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.

#### **8. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities**

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 UNITED STATES.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

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.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. Additional meetings with elected officials have been scheduled to further explore the recommendations.

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 also record the limited English proficiency (LEP) and the preferred language of each applicant, registrant, participant and terminée (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 allege 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 LWIA’s 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 are 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. One example is our Disability Employment Initiative Round V grant that focuses on career pathways for youth. 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 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 lease holder, IDES will then work with Central Management Services and/or the landlord to correct any findings.

**9. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for English Language Learners**

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

**Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for 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 40,000 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.

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 CMS master contract that provides translation 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.

#### **IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs**

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

The plan development process has also evolved. 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 2018, Illinois has the advantage of using now well-established cross-program groups created by the IWIB to provide and review plan content and serve as sounding boards to ensure that the IWIB's vision is faithfully rendered in the plan. For the 2018 modification, the IWIB established an ad hoc 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 Community College President's Council. Also new for 2018, the team is using technology to allow online collaborative editing from each of the 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. Going forward these groups will provide system leadership coordinated through the IWIB.

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 and the Unified 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 Work Group (IWG)*

This group of top program administrators began meeting in May 2015 and continue 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 this group 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 (Attachment J) (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20J%20-%20Governors%20Guidelines.pdf>) providing direction and support regarding negotiations of program partners at the state and local levels. The Governor’s Guidelines have since been revised twice, with the latest revision issued in December 2016. Supplemental guidance to the Governor’s Guidelines was subsequently issued to guide MOU and annual budget negotiations specific to Program Year 2017 (State Fiscal Year 2018). A third revision for Program Year 2018 (State Fiscal Year 2019) is pending approval, and updates will be issued going forward as needed;
- 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;
- 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;
- In April 2017, a member of the Interagency Work Group shared the principles of the Illinois MOU development process with a national audience on a WorkforceGPS WIOA Webinar.

During the 2015-2016 regional and local planning cycle, the Interagency Work Group experimented with creating regional technical assistance teams made up of core partner field staff. The intent was to create teams of “WIOA experts” closer to the front lines that could respond very quickly to resolve implementation issues. In 2017 the IWG conducted an evaluation and determined that these teams had varied levels of success. Therefore, the Interagency Work Group modified the process and implemented a new procedure for obtaining local input on WIOA implementation issues. Required program partner “troubleshooters” were put into place to monitor

and identify the need for technical assistance statewide. The IWG created characteristics of what qualified as a “local implementation issue.” A form was put into place for “troubleshooters” to complete, which elevates the implementation issue to the Interagency Work Group for consideration, review and response to the local area.

The State Interagency Work Group is also adapting its structure to align with progress made on WIOA implementation since 2015. At its monthly meeting in February 2018, the IWG took under consideration a proposal to morph into two cross-program entities: 1) a program executive group (meeting quarterly), and 2) a program management group (meeting monthly). The executive group will provide the opportunity for direct interaction between partner senior leadership to ensure that their programs continue improving outcomes for clients and businesses. The management group will continue providing technical assistance to local staff for troubleshooting, identification of promising practices, and proposing policy changes for consideration.

#### *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 Work Group has 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 attempt at talent flow analysis led to a successful evaluation of where graduates found employment and identified wage differentials based on industry and locale.

#### *Workforce Education Strategic Planning*

The ICCB worked with state and local partners in the development of a statewide Workforce Education Strategic Plan (WESP). 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 ([www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan](http://www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan)). 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 State Unified Plan shared with the audience how the plans align.

The information gathered through these education planning meetings was used to inform WIOA state and regional planning efforts that 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

#### *Future of AJCs Cohort Challenge*

In February 2018, The UNITED STATES Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration announced that Illinois was selected to participate in the “Future of AJCs Cohort Challenge”. The Illinois AJC

Workforce Consortium is one of only eight teams representing states, local areas, and regions selected from among 28 that applied. Illinois' team members represent the IWIB, core WIOA agency staff, and mandated partners at the state and local levels. The AJCs Cohort Challenge provides an opportunity for Illinois to engage in system design with workforce peers, partner, and experts. This learning will be infused with business principles from industry representatives who have led similar design processes in an effort to rethink service delivery models and methods to ensure all customers can readily access services in a user-friendly manner and benefit from technology. The Illinois team will use the learning from this process to inform policy under development or planned. A specific example is the IWIB's Service Integration Policy Work Group, which is realigning its work plan with that of the AJCs Cohort Challenge so that discoveries from the cohort process may be integrated, as appropriate, into service integration policy. Also, peer innovations in technology and service strategies and private sector models implemented by industry leaders that surface through this cohort process will be disseminated throughout the workforce system by Illinois' team members.