

Report of the Illinois Disadvantaged Youth Task Force



Illinois Workforce Innovation Board

2016

Executive Summary

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board created the Disadvantaged Youth Task Force to use the vision and principles of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified State Plan to frame recommendations for creating sustainable career pathways for youth throughout the state. With a focus on the needs of young people who are not in school and not working, coined *Opportunity Youth*, this report recognizes the need to provide opportunities for these youth to connect to meaningful education, training, and employment.

Of the estimated 1.8 million youth ages 15-24 living in Illinois in 2013, approximately 18.3% were considered to be in poverty and 19.3% were unemployed – more than twice the rate of the entire labor force. Further, of this 15-24 year-old cohort, an estimated 33.5% were not in school or working. These opportunity youth have much higher poverty (30%) and unemployment (40.2%) rates than the general population that age.

Task Force members¹ worked with the Illinois business community, the Illinois P-20 Council, Illinois Learning Exchanges, state boards, agencies, and other partners to create a set of recommendations for meeting the needs of Illinois youth with barriers to employment. These recommendations support pilot projects that blend together various funding streams to support business-led sector initiatives based on career pathways that fully mainstream this youth population. These programs are built on a three-part platform of work-based learning, the development of foundational skills, and continuous improvement through education and training.

Ten success elements for workforce pilot programs serving opportunity youth were identified by the task force. These elements demonstrate the principles, strategies, and criteria in the WIOA Unified State Plan and how various funding sources may be blended for full regional ownership and sustainability:

1. **Partnerships** with education, employers, and workforce boards to plan and leverage resources.
2. **Business engagement** in developing and managing career pathway programs.
3. **Credentials, certifications, and/or postsecondary access** that result from career pathway programs.
4. **High demand industries and higher skill occupations** that meet youth earnings and career goals.
5. **Work-based learning** opportunities to experience the workplace first-hand.
6. **Individual career/employment plans** for each youth participant.
7. **Individual supports** available to meet the unique needs of each youth program participant.
8. **Contextualized learning and work-based skills** that prepare youth for employment.
9. **Measuring results and continuous improvement** methodology to maintain and enhance program quality.
10. **Sustainability** plans that connect the program to broader long-term talent strategies.

Three recommendations identified by the task force support local and regional pilot-testing and also build on the framework described in the state plan. These include:

¹ See Appendix 1

1. Reinvigorating supports for a business-driven sector strategy framework with the Illinois Pathways framework at its core.
2. Continue the work of the Opportunity Youth Task Force to support practitioners, research, and data tools.
3. Foster the creation of opportunity youth systems at the regional level, including the release of a Request for Application that incorporates the success elements and recommendations in this report.

Section 1: Introduction

The WIOA represents a renewed and forward-thinking commitment to workforce development through innovation and support for individual and state economic growth. It recognizes the need to strengthen incentives and connections to employment and training opportunities that lead to economic prosperity for workers and their families.

WIOA addresses changing workforce dynamics for youth in several ways. Youth disconnected from both school and work face more barriers than ever, and WIOA addresses this by requiring that WIOA Title I increase the investment in out-of-school youth by requiring that at least 75% of funds dedicated to serving youth be spent on workforce investment services for out-of-school youth, up from 30% under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).² Another change incorporates the addition of a 20% spending minimum for youth work experiences, including employment opportunities, pre-apprenticeship, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training. WIOA Title IV also incorporates a requirement that “not less than 15%” of Vocational Rehabilitation funds be spent on pre-employment transition services for youth with disabilities.

This report begins with a discussion of the State’s framework for workforce development and implications for youth employment and training in Section 2, including the questions that were identified by the task force as crucial to successful, demand-driven, regionally designed, and state supported programs for young people. This is followed by a profile of Illinois opportunity youth in Section 3 and an overview of current resources available to serve Illinois WIOA-eligible youth in Section 4. Section 5 focuses on opportunities for program coordination, with an emphasis on programs that incorporate elements associated with successful career pathways programs. That section will include criteria for measuring adherence to those key elements that were identified by the Task Force. Section 6 provides recommendations for the development of pilot projects, state supports, networks, and evaluation to support better education and employment outcomes for opportunity youth.

Section 2: Illinois’ Workforce Vision and State Plan

This report focuses on the needs and programs that support the opportunity youth population. It is driven by the vision and guiding principles currently in development as part of Illinois’ WIOA Unified State Plan, which provides a blueprint for strengthening Illinois’ education, human services, and workforce systems to better serve youth and adults with barriers to employment. Additionally, both the

² Public Law 113–128, 113th Congress, JULY 22, 2014
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-113publ128/pdf/PLAW-113publ128.pdf>

State Plan and this report address the requirement for engagement and investment from the business community in creating more efficient and effective education to employment systems. The vision of the State Plan is to “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.”³

The following guiding principles described in the State Plan apply to all target populations served by WIOA-funded programs, including opportunity youth:

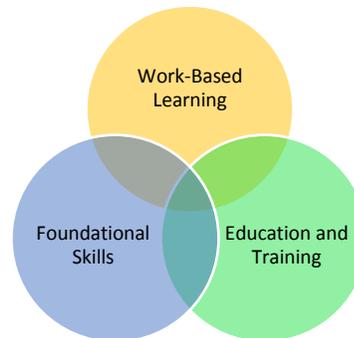
1. Business Demand Driven Orientation Through a Sector Strategy Framework
2. Strong Partnerships with Business at All Levels
3. Career Pathways to Jobs of Today and Tomorrow
4. Integrated Service Delivery
5. Access and Opportunity for all Populations
6. Cross-agency Collaboration and Alignment for Developing or Promoting Career Pathways and Industry Recognized Stackable Credentials
7. Clear Metrics for Progress and Success
8. Focus on Continuous Improvement and Innovation

A focus for WIOA is to make the career pathways approach the “framework for state and local unified/combined planning that reorients existing education and workforce services (including those authorized under WIOA) from myriad disconnected programs towards one system focused on individuals’ postsecondary and economic success.”⁴ The recommendations of this report build on longstanding efforts in Illinois to connect education to employment systems aimed at improving employment outcomes for Illinois’ young people by developing *career pathway systems* at the state, regional, and local levels. Career pathways offer a clear sequence of educational coursework and/or training aligned with employer-validated work readiness standards and competencies. Illinois has developed innovative public-private partnerships for statewide sector coordination in identified high-growth sectors and has supported models that create mechanisms for local/regional pathway implementation. The state can build on these efforts to make more meaningful connections between young people and the education and employment systems that serve them, particularly for those young people who are disconnected from both.

³ Illinois WIOA Unified State Plan (Draft). January 16, 2016.
<https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Outreach/Pages/StateUnifiedPlan.aspx>

⁴ Department of Labor. 2015. Career Pathways Toolkit: A Guide for System Development.
<https://blog.dol.gov/2015/09/03/building-better-career-pathways/>

Career Pathways: System coordination across both a statewide sector-based framework and through local/regional implementation efforts requires a framework that provides key elements for activity. As noted in the introduction, the career pathways framework is organized around three developmental areas: workplace skills, through work-based learning opportunities, particularly those skills that enable people to grow in their work; the development of foundational skills, such as accountability, timeliness, and interpersonal skills, those skills that are essential to developing workplace relationships with others; and the continuation of education and training, to develop and continuously fine-tune technical and academic skills which support both personal and business development goals.



As programs for opportunity youth have been developed, key questions arise that help to drive program improvement, coordination, and alignment. The Opportunity Youth Task Force worked with partners at the state and national level to identify the key questions that drive the crucial elements of career pathway systems:

1. ***Are there partnerships?*** Specifically, are there partners (who minimally include secondary and postsecondary educational institutions, public and private employers and workforce development boards) who will plan and commit to leveraging resources to educate, train, support, and/or identify employment for youth?
2. ***Is there business engagement/investment?*** Do employers play a leadership role in developing and managing career pathway programs to ensure that careers are high demand/higher skill at the local, regional, and/or state level, content is current, and work-based learning opportunities are integrated throughout the pathway experience?
3. ***Do career pathway programs lead to the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential?*** Specifically, is it a credential that consists of an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State or Federal government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree with opportunities to obtain advanced standing throughout the pipeline (such as early college credit)?
4. ***Do the programs address high demand industries that result in high skill occupations?*** Do the career pathway programs address high-demand industries and occupations that meet state, regional, and local youth earnings goals and provide career advancement opportunities to higher skill and higher earnings jobs?
5. ***Do the programs include work-based learning experiences and capstone projects?*** Do the career pathway programs include opportunities to experience the workplace through related paid or unpaid internships, apprenticeships, student organization activities, and capstone projects?
6. ***Are individual career/employment plans used in conjunction with these programs?*** Based on career information access, are individual career/employment plans developed by participants who

enter pathway programs that outline the individual goals and path of coursework/experiences needed to attain those goals?

7. **Have individual supports been identified?** Is a comprehensive set of support services available that to meet the individual needs of each pathway program participant?
8. **Is pathway program instruction contextualized and does it address workplace skills?** Is instruction related to real-world, real-life situations and experiences? Has instruction been linked to an increase in digital literacy skills, specifically the ability to find, utilize, evaluate, share, and create content using information technologies and the Internet? Is application of learning with integrated content of related foundational and academic skills a primary focus?
9. **Is there a way to measure results and is there a plan for continuous improvement?** Are pathway programs measuring results on indicators and benchmarks and using them to improve performance through evidence-based practices to remain responsive to the needs of the pathway participant and the business community?
10. **Is there a plan for sustainability?** Is there a sustainable mechanism for keeping the project running? Is this plan part of a broader and long-term public and private human resources strategic commitment?

The identification of these key questions has led to a series of defined *Career Pathways* elements, criteria, and suggested evidence and tools for measurement, described in Appendix 2. Also attached to this table are examples of programs which have combined some of those important elements of career pathways to meet the diverse needs of young people, including opportunity youth. These examples are by no means an exhaustive list, but merely serve to illustrate the range of programmatic flexibility that is possible within the range of identified elements.

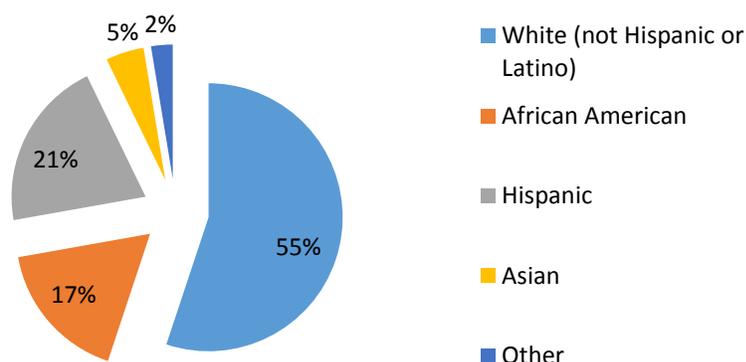
Section 3: A Profile of Opportunity Youth in Illinois

An estimated 1.79 million youth ages 15-24 lived in Illinois in 2013, and while this represented 13.9% of the state's total population, approximately 18.3% of these youth were considered to be in poverty.⁵ This disproportionately high poverty rate correlates to the youth unemployment rate which, at 19.3% in 2013, was more than double that of the entire labor force (9.2%) This situation will likely not improve without targeted interventions.

Illinois youth generally reflect the racial composition of the U.S. with White, African American, Hispanic, and Asian racial groups constituting 55%, 15%, 21%, and 4% of the total national population, respectively (see Figure 1).

⁵ The U.S. Census Bureau breaks down data on various indicators, such as population levels and school enrollment rates, along different age groups. The 15-24 age group is used in certain sections of the report where there is no data available for the 16-24 age group.

Figure 1: Racial composition of youth population (15-24 year olds) in Illinois, source: U.S. Census.



Despite declining overall unemployment rates, youth unemployment remains a chronic and persistent problem. Young people in the labor market “...have long had the greatest difficulty maintaining stable employment.”⁶ However, a youth unemployment rate that is more than double that of the entire labor force, and even higher for young minorities, speaks to a broader and more systemic issue of how young people are connected to the labor force.

In 2013, an estimated 33.5% of youth 15-24 were not enrolled in school nor were they employed. Further, African-American youth are far more likely to be in poverty, be unemployed, or not in school. Although they represent 17% of all youth in Illinois, they comprise 30% of all youth in poverty, have a 40.2% unemployment rate, and a school enrollment rate of 62.1%.

Young people who are not in school and not working are a particular focus for WIOA. Illinois had an estimated 184,000 youth between 18 and 24 who fell into this category in 2013. More recent studies, such as the report by the Great Cities Institute, affirmed this distressing profile.⁷ The percentage of 20-24-year-old opportunity youth in Illinois in 2014 was reported as 38.3% for African-Americans, 16% for Hispanics, and 10.8% for Whites. These percentages increase to 40.9% and 18.7% for African-American and Hispanic youth, respectively, in Chicago. Figure 2 shows the distribution of opportunity youth as a percentage of all youth 16-24 years old by Public Use Microdata Areas, regions drawn by the U.S. Census Bureau every 10 years that contain a population of at least 100,000.

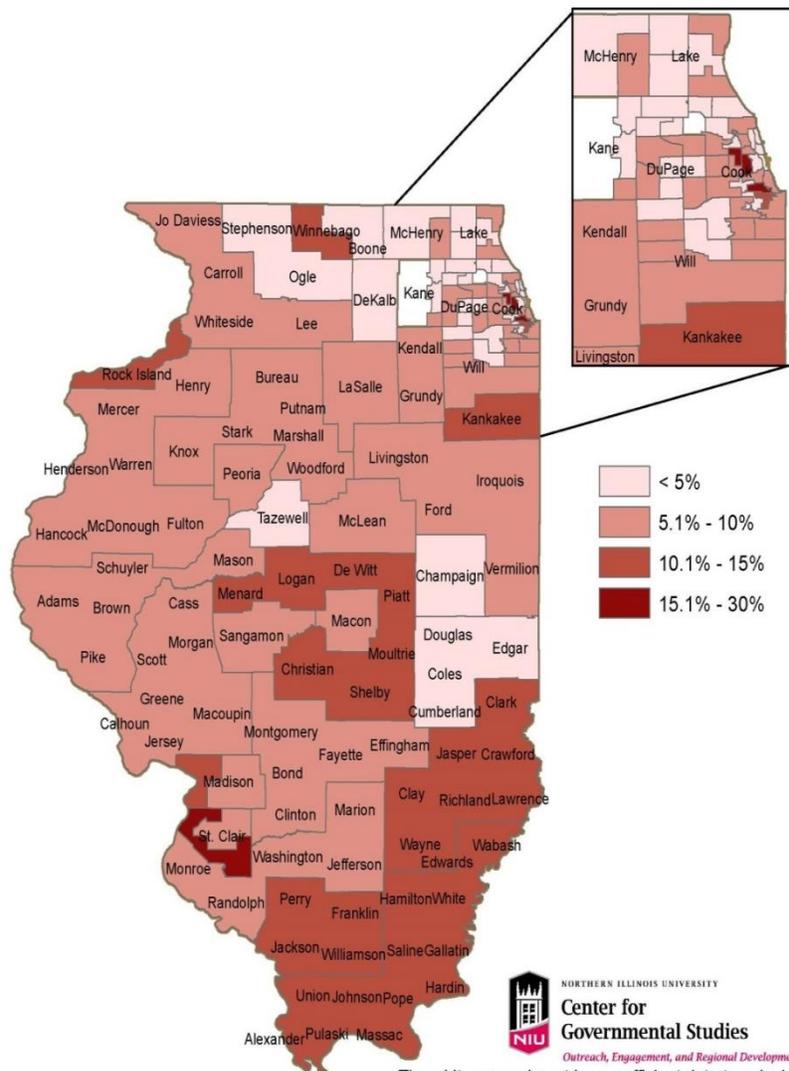
A segment of opportunity youth with unique challenges are the unauthorized children of immigrants. These young people, often referred to as Deferred Action for Child Arrivals or DACA youth, are represented in Census information if they had been in the U.S. for at least five years, were younger than 16 at the time of their arrival, and were under 30 at the time of the American Community Survey. The

⁶ Fiscal Times, 2015; Schmillen and Umkehrer, 2013.

⁷ Cordova, T.L., Wilson, M.D., Morsey, J.C., (January 2016). *Lost: The Crisis of Jobless and Out of School and Young Adults in Chicago, Illinois and the U.S.* Chicago, IL: Great Cities Institute. <https://greatcities.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ASN-Report-v3.2.pdf>

Migration Policy Institute estimates the number of DACA youth in Illinois at 99,000.⁸ Of these, an estimated 18,000 were ages 15-30 and did not have a high school diploma or its equivalent nor were they enrolled in school. The youth, who were DACA-eligible except for their educational status, were largely from Mexico and Central America (96%), 73% were limited English proficient, 32% were unemployed, and 31% were below poverty level.

Figure 2: Percent of 16-24 year olds not in school and not in the labor force among all 16-24 year olds, source: Public Use Microdata Sample, NIU Center for Governmental Studies.



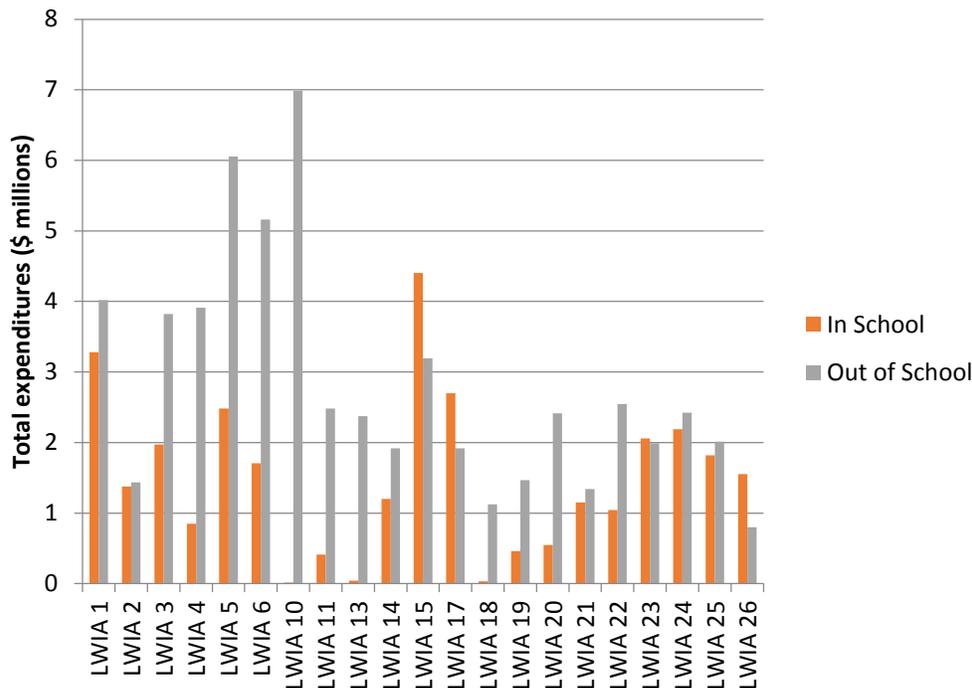
The white areas do not have sufficient data to calculate.
 Sources: IPUMS-USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org,
 U.S. Census Bureau 1 Year American Community Survey Data, 2014

⁸ <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/content/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca-profile-illinois>

Illinois WIOA-funded programs reported 5,540 out-of-school youth who entered employment between program years 2009 and 2013 in Illinois, roughly 3% of all Illinois opportunity youth 18 to 24 years of age. This suggests a serious disconnect between this youth population and the education and employment systems.

Fortunately, opportunity youth are receiving more emphasis under WIOA than under the Workforce Investment Act with the requirement that services to out-of-school youth increase from 30% of the total youth allocation to 75%. This will challenge many of Illinois’ local workforce areas who were unable to meet the lower 30% requirement under WIA to more than double their services to out-of-school youth (see Fig. 3). However, given that approximately 3.0% of Illinois opportunity youth entered employment as a result of WIA programs from PY09-PY13, this new requirement should more than double the impact on this important target population.

Figure 3: Total expenditures on youth customers (PY09-PY13), by LWIA, source: Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce).

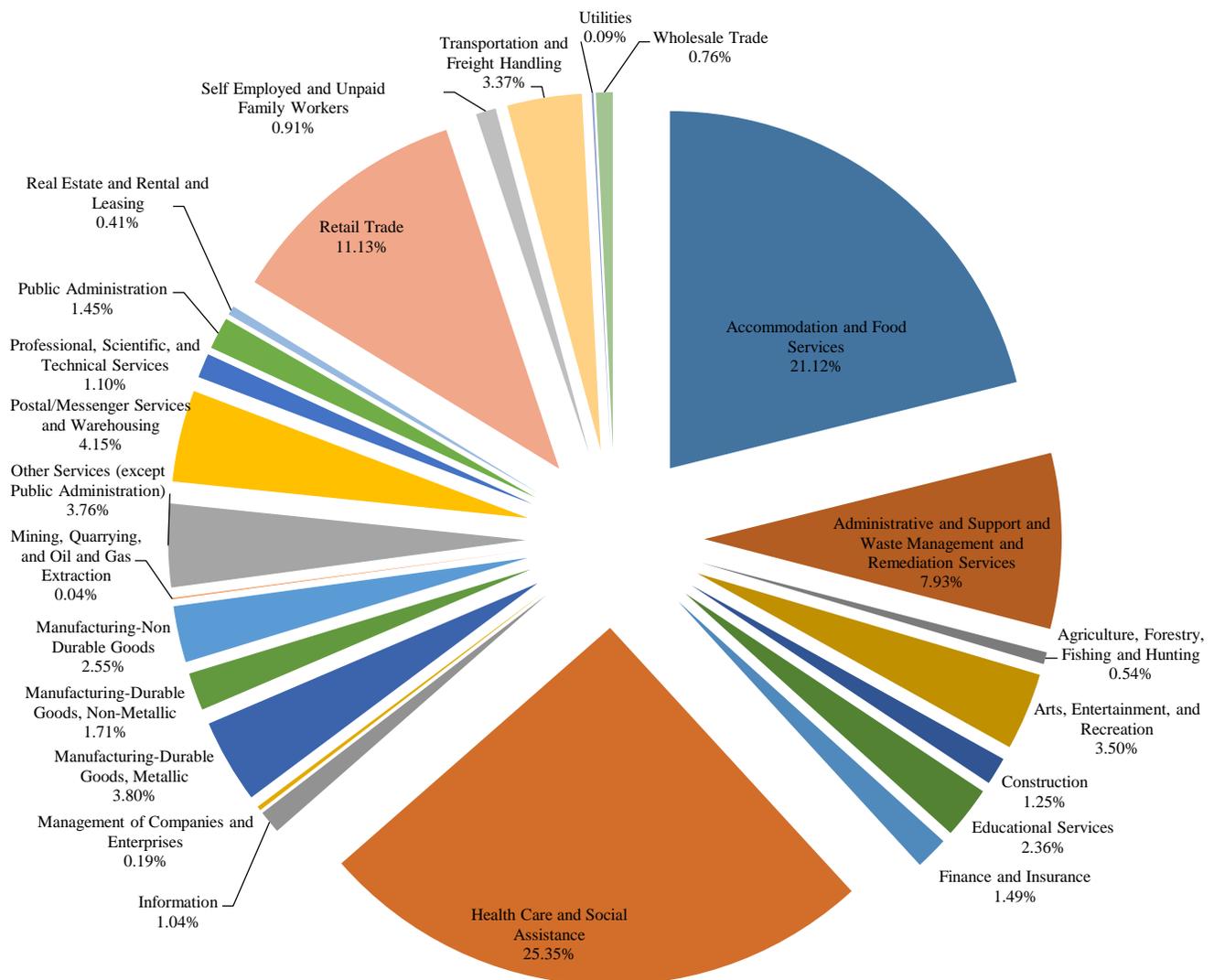


Note: LWIA 7 was omitted to avoid a visual distortion of the chart. The total number of in school and out of school youth participants in LWIA 7 was 10,284 and 11,940 respectively. The total number of in school and out of school youth participants served in Illinois in the past 5 PYs was **18,436** and **22,904** respectively.

As Illinois gears up to meet challenging new targets for the individuals served through WIOA, it is important to note that connecting a young person to employment is not necessarily a step out of poverty – particularly for opportunity youth. Figure 4 shows the distribution by industry for out-of-school youth between 14 and 24 years of age who entered employment between program years 2009 and 2013. Health Care and Social Assistance, Accommodations and Food Service, and Retail Trade are

the three largest industries in which opportunity youth entered employment. Although those jobs reflect invaluable work experience and a paycheck, beginning wages for entry-level positions in those sectors are typically insufficient to move those workers into economic self-sufficiency. It will be critical that these youth benefit from career pathway support and continuing education to enable them to move into living wage jobs in those or other industries.

Figure 4: Distribution by industry, of out-of-school youth who entered employment, source: Commerce.



Section 4: Current Resources

Equipping youth with the skills, experience, and support services they need to overcome barriers to employment requires a broad array of resources. In addition to education, training, and job placement services, youth who are involved in the justice or foster care systems, are homeless, have disabilities, are

parents, or who are English language learners may need additional - and often intensive - support services.

Many public, private, and philanthropic resources exist to help address the removal of barriers to employment for Illinois youth. However, because these resources have different target populations and provide different types of services, it is essential that workforce development systems “braid and blend” funding from various sources. This strategy recognizes that multiple complementary funding sources offer a more comprehensive, customized, and sustainable approach for supporting workforce service delivery.

This need to weave together public funding for workforce development is recognized in WIOA. WIOA strengthens the relationship between the core partner programs. In the spirit of strengthening the integration of these departmental functions and resources, Illinois is submitting a single unified state plan under WIOA. The State also intends to integrate a variety of non-core youth-serving programs into Illinois’ workforce development system.

WIOA Youth-Serving Funding. Four main federal funding sources support workforce development at the state and local levels.

WIOA Title I is the primary source of federal workforce development funding to prepare low-income adults, youth, and dislocated workers for employment and help them continue to build skills once they are employed. Priority is placed on *out-of-school youth* (ages 16-24) with 75% of formula funding addressing this population. Work-based learning opportunities are emphasized to provide for ‘learning while earning’ with an increased focus on establishing relationships with employers. The *in-school youth* age range for those who are low-income and are English language learners, homeless, or in/aged out of foster care is 14-21. Career pathways for youth and adults are emphasized with a focus on obtaining industry certificates and/or credentials and/or a postsecondary credential. These funds are administered by Commerce.

WIOA Title II is administered by the Illinois Community College Board as it focuses on adult education and family literacy. Adults are defined in this title as at least 16 years of age and thus older youth may qualify for services under this legislation. The four-fold purpose of this legislation is to assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge, skills, and postsecondary credentials needed for employment and self-sufficiency. Title II also helps parents obtain the educational skills needed to become full partners in the educational development of their children which improves economic opportunities for their families. Finally, Title II also assists immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners.

WIOA Title III provides employment services and career counseling to job seekers as well as labor information services to employers and potential employees. Services are available to any person seeking employment, regardless of employment status with the priority populations of ‘disabled veterans’ and veterans. Employers also may access services. The Illinois Department of Employment Security administers Title III funds.

WIOA Title IV, or the amended Vocational Rehabilitation Act, focuses on increasing opportunities, particularly for those individuals with disabilities who face barriers to employment, and promotes the connection between education, career preparation, and employment. The focus on youth is expanded by providing increased opportunities to practice workplace skills and obtain work experience. Highlights include: 1) state vocational rehabilitation agencies must make “pre-employment transition services” available to all students with disabilities; 2) at least 15% of Title IV must be used to provide pre-employment transition services from secondary to postsecondary education and/or competitive employment; and 3) 50% of the Supported Employment program funds are earmarked to assist those with the most significant disabilities by providing the support services they need to obtain employment.

Additional Public Funding Sources. Six additional programs serve youth targeted under WIOA.

SSA Title IV-E, the Federal Foster Care Program, helps provide safe and stable out-of-home care for children until the children are safely returned home or placed permanently with adoptive families or other arrangements. Activities and programs include help with education, employment, financial management, housing, emotional support and connections to caring adults for older youth in foster care. The program is intended to serve youth who are likely to remain in foster care until age 18, youth who have left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption, and young adults ages 18-21 who have “aged out” of the foster care system. This program is administered by the Illinois Department of Human Services.

The *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act* develops the academic, career, and technical skills of secondary and postsecondary students enrolled in career and technical education. The Act requires states to set targets for nontraditional enrollment and completion by gender, ensuring that women and men participate in and complete training programs in fields where they are traditionally underrepresented. The Act also includes provisions for helping special populations (i.e., individuals with disabilities; individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including foster children; individuals preparing for nontraditional fields; single parents, including single pregnant women; displaced homemakers; and individuals with limited English proficiency) to enroll and complete CTE programs, preparing them for high-skill and high-wage employment.

Truant’s Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) is a State-funded program to serve students with attendance problems and/or dropouts up to 21 years of age. Truancy prevention and intervention services and optional education efforts are also supported. Optional education offers alternatives to regular school attendance and modified instruction or other services to prevent students from dropping out of school. All projects must develop a community-based program plan and coordinate their efforts with others concerned with the welfare of youth.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) provides assistance for pregnant women and families with one or more dependent children. TANF provides financial assistance to help pay for food, shelter, utilities, and other non-medical expenses. A variety of workforce-related services are also provided:

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- subsidized and unsubsidized employment
- job search and job readiness (limited to not more than 6 weeks in a federal fiscal year)
- community service
- work experience
- on-the-job training
- vocational educational training
- caring for a child of a recipient in community service
- job skills training and education directly related to employment
- completion of a secondary school program

Grants for Postsecondary Education are offered to Illinois youth through the Federal Pell Grant Program and the State's Monetary Award Program (MAP). Pell grants provide low-income undergraduate and certain post-baccalaureate students with grants to access postsecondary education. These grants do not have to be repaid. Students may use their grants at any one of approximately 5,400 participating postsecondary institutions. Grants are direct grants awarded through participating institutions to students with financial need who have not received their first bachelor's degree or who are enrolled in certain post-baccalaureate programs that lead to teacher certification or licensure. The U.S. Department of Education administers the Pell Program.

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission offers need-based scholarships to students through the MAP. MAP grants are applied toward tuition and mandatory fees for undergraduate students attending approved Illinois public and private two- and four-year colleges, universities, hospital schools, and certain other degree-granting institutions. The maximum MAP award in 2016 is \$4,720.

Juvenile Justice Centers in Illinois are operated by the Department of Juvenile Justice. It is the mission of the Department to reduce recidivism by providing individualized services to youth aged 21 and under who are housed at the centers. The Department of Juvenile Justice operates School District 428. The district is responsible for educating youth in the Department of Juvenile Justice and inmates age 21 or under within the Department of Corrections who have not yet earned a high school diploma or a GED certificate. Programs and services provided include:

- Assessments
- Substance abuse and mental health treatment
- Individual and group counseling
- Case management
- Health care
- Education
- Chaplaincy
- Volunteer Services
- Leisure Time Services

Section 5: Career Pathways: Theory of Action around Program Coordination for Opportunity Youth

WIOA emphasizes deeper investment in a system which supports demand-driven programs that address the diverse needs of young people. Young people who are disconnected from either the employment and/or education system represent diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and circumstances, and although being disconnected “is both a consequence and cause of poverty, many of these young people come from moderate means.”⁹ As such, the issue of disconnection (as identified in Table 1) for youth requires various approaches to solve.

Table 1: Opportunity Youth Segmentation. Opportunity youth can be segmented based upon their

Higher	C: Facing obstacles outside education <i>High school or better education</i> Unable to transition	A: Mismatched with the employment system <i>High School or better education</i> Able to transition
	D: Facing multiple hurdles <i>Less than high school education</i> Unable to transition	B: Mismatched with the education system <i>Less than high school education</i> Able to transition
Lower	Lower	Higher

Ability to Take Up Opportunities

Source: White House Council on Community Solutions. June 2012. *Community Solutions for Opportunity Youth*. http://www.serve.gov/sites/default/files/ctools/12_0604whccs_finalreport.pdf

degree of preparation and ability to take up opportunities

A key to shifting the conversation from disconnection to *opportunity* is a recognition that young people are ready and eager to be part of the solution. Opportunity youth desire ways in which to reconnect to work and to school, but face multiple obstacles in their attempts to do so.¹⁰ These obstacles are often shaped by the degree of preparation young people have had as well as their own ability to take advantage of opportunities.

Understanding opportunity youths’ degree of preparation and their ability to take advantage of opportunities helps the public and private community understand what their critical needs are as well as what types of services these young people require to succeed.

⁹ The White House Council on Community Solutions. June 2012. *Community Solutions for Opportunity Youth*. http://www.serve.gov/sites/default/files/ctools/12_0604whccs_finalreport.pdf

¹⁰ For a discussion on this topic, see: The White House Council on Community Solutions. June 2012. *Community Solutions for Opportunity Youth*. http://www.serve.gov/sites/default/files/ctools/12_0604whccs_finalreport.pdf

Table 2: Needs and Supports Required for Opportunity Youth

Types of employment opportunities open to youth increase along this spectrum

	Group D Facing Multiple Hurdles	Group C Facing Obstacles Outside Education	Group B Mismatched with Education System	Group A Mismatched with Employment System
Critical Needs	Integrated services across education, social supports, and employability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wraparound supports • Alternative pathways to learning & employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways to GED/high school completion • Alternative training and credentialing programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment pathways & more advanced credentialing opportunities
Types of Support Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for education within a stable set of interventions (identified in group C) • Move youth a “step up the ladder” on path to full employability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food access • Housing and transport • Health/mental health services • Life skills mentoring • Daycare • Financial/legal literacy • Alternative pathways to GED, diploma, or community college 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school graduation support • GED support • On-the-job training and work learning programs • Alternative credentialing programs • Afterschool summer programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community college collaborations • Certification/credentialing programs • Internship or apprenticeship opportunities • Starter jobs

Source: White House Council on Community Solutions. June 2012. *Community Solutions for Opportunity Youth*. http://www.serve.gov/sites/default/files/ctools/12_0604whccs_finalreport.pdf

The variety of supports that address the needs of opportunity youth speak to the need for a diversified approach, one that allows for local, contextually appropriate solutions, but that also is connected to a broader statewide vision for action.

Illinois Investments in Sector-Based Strategies: Illinois has invested heavily in a sector-based strategy that leverages the resources, investments, and innovation within industry sectors and has a vision for education, community, and workforce alignment across communities using this sector-based framework. At the core of this vision are career pathways, which offer a clear sequence, or pathway, of education coursework and/or training credentials that are aligned with employer-validated work-readiness standards and competencies.¹¹

Illinois is clear in its approach to developing a statewide, sector-based system that can help the local and regional implementation of career pathway systems thrive. Illinois Pathways was launched in 2011 as a statewide public-private initiative for better aligning education and workforce around priority sectors.

¹¹ Department of Labor. 2015. Career Pathways Toolkit: A Guide for System Development. <https://blog.dol.gov/2015/09/03/building-better-career-pathways/>

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Illinois Pathways focuses on developing career pathway systems that make direct connections between what students learn in the classroom, supplementary work-based learning experiences they have, and the employment opportunities available to them in the job market. Built on longstanding strengths in Illinois, particularly in Agricultural Education and Career and Technical Education Programs of Study, six state agencies entered into an intergovernmental agreement to align policies and programs in support of Illinois Pathways to address two goals:

1. increase the number of Illinoisans who attain a postsecondary credential and are prepared for employment in high-demand, high-wage occupations; and
2. spur state and regional economic development by developing a homegrown talent pipeline for areas of workforce need.

In 2012, as a core strategy of Illinois Pathways, Illinois launched 8 STEM Learning Exchanges, public-private partnerships that align sector-based support from businesses, non-profit organizations, private funding organizations, and public entities in the following identified high-growth industry sectors:

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Energy
- Finance
- Healthcare
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing
- Research and Development
- Transportation, Distribution and Logistics

Since 2012, the STEM Learning Exchanges have leveraged \$5 million in matching private resources for the State's \$3 million investment from Race to the Top¹² and Department of Commerce funding.

The STEM Learning Exchanges have focused on:

- a) advising regions on career pathway system structure and best practices in a particular sector;
- b) delivering high quality curricular and professional development resources; and
- c) expanding access to real world problem-based challenges and work-based learning.¹³

¹² <http://www2.illinoisworknet.com/ilpathways/Pages/Background.aspx> and http://www.isbe.net/racetothetop/htmls/state_projects.htm

¹³ These functions have helped to create opportunities for alignment across regions and have expanded regional capacity to make more meaningful connections to students and industry by: increasing certifications and professional development in Manufacturing; delivering project-based learning with direct industry involvement and investment in Research and Development; modularizing and expanding access to work-based learning frameworks based on best practices as well as expanding access to project-based learning through hands-on applications in Information Technology; expanding access to group simulations with industry partners in the Finance sector; expanding access to Supervised Agricultural Experiences to Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resource students; and increasing classroom and professional exposure to and training on Smart Grid technologies in the Energy Sector.

Particularly in relation to curricular and professional development resources and expanding access to real world problem-based challenges and work-based learning, each of the STEM Learning Exchanges has focused their efforts at statewide sector coordination in unique ways.¹⁴). In addressing the needs of opportunity youth, these functions can create opportunities for alignment across regions, particularly in relation to developing sector-based foundational skills, work-based learning and problem-based learning frameworks, and professional development/curricular resources. Each STEM Learning Exchange has developed as per the needs and organization of the industry it represented, and as such, some have been able to provide more robust support to the sector than others. The original focus for the STEM Learning Exchanges, as per the Race to the Top structure, was on process and program improvement in developing career pathways across the grade 9-14 continuum with an emphasis on cross-sector collaboration for in-school youth. However, this foundation for sector-based alignment in Illinois should be further explored for expansion to other populations, particularly out-of-school youth.

Illinois is interested in investing in local and regional implementation efforts that focus on creating clearer avenues for business investment in strengthening the linkage between education and employment systems. A program that focuses on local implementation of employer-driven career pathway system development is the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Talent Pipeline Management initiative (TPM), in which Illinois has made preliminary investments and intends to continue to support. TPM takes the lessons from Supply Chain Management to improve the way in which employers and education providers are connected at the local/regional level.

In particular, TPM focuses on:

- a) human resource management, with an emphasis on customized talent solutions for core capabilities and jobs, as well as shared ownership and accountability for developing and executing talent management solutions;
- b) building business led-collaborative networks that create shared value, particularly through short-term labor market forecasting and real-time data sharing (to get an accurate picture of what skills are in demand), replacing unnecessary academic credentialing and experience with transparent industry-recognized credentials and competencies, and talent pipeline management strategies for improving the current workforce and building a new pipeline for high value jobs; and
- c) changing the use of performance measures and data systems for talent management, emphasizing balanced scorecards and aligned measures and incentives, as well as using predictive tools for identifying indicators of worker productivity and performance.¹⁵

Career Pathway System Development: This discussion on existing Illinois investments in career pathway system development should speak to the commitment in Illinois to aligning statewide resources and tools and the local/regional projects that are most connected to learners. There was a broad recognition

¹⁴ STEM Learning Exchange Fall 2015 Impact Report.
https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/DownloadPrint/15%20EdSys%20IL%20Pathways%20Impact%20Report%20-%20Fall%202015_Final.pdf

¹⁵ U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. 2015: Talent Pipeline Management: A New Approach to Closing the Skills Gap.
<https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/talent-pipeline-management>

in the Youth Task Force discussions that in order for project work at the local level to be sustainable, it must lead to larger systemic change.

As noted in the introduction and in Section 2, the theory for action around career pathway system development in Illinois is constructed around three areas for student success:

1. Work-based Learning
2. Development of Foundational Skills
3. Continuous Education and Training

These three components for learner success should be rooted in strategies which:

1. Focus on building capacity for implementation and ownership across the region. Collaboration should include capacity-building efforts to help stakeholders better understand and support the broader vision of career pathway system development. Ownership should belong to multiple champions from both the public and private sectors. This ensures that projects will outlive changes in leadership.
2. Link independent projects for learners to a broader vision for economic development. Isolated projects are likely to remain as such. Expanding ownership across sectors (including business, public entities, educational institutions, municipal leaders, workforce development agencies, etc.) creates a strong foundation for long-term growth and sustainability for the development of career pathways as a central reform measure for economic development.
3. Leverage state and national resources and tool where possible. There are multiple barriers¹⁶ to bringing career pathway systems to scale, most of which should be addressed at the systemic level:
 - a. *Credentials*: There are very clear obstacles to transferability and the recognition of stackable, portable, industry-recognized credentials, which include an absence of industry agreement on a common set of credentials in many sectors.
 - b. *Federal Policies and Regulations/Performance and Outcome Measures*: Federal policies and regulations can also often create roadblocks to the success of career pathway systems, for example, through limits on training as well as performance and outcome measures and reporting requirements that are not aligned.
 - c. *Funding Limitations*: Funding cuts also often erode student services and supports which are of particular importance to opportunity youth.
 - d. *Articulation between Education System and Providers*: Although Illinois is one of only three states above the national average on all indicators of effective transfer of students from community colleges to universities and ranks third in the nation for community college transfers completion of four year degrees, transfer gaps remain for low income and students of color that should be addressed to meet the needs of this population.¹⁷

¹⁶ In early 2015, specific barriers to bringing career pathway systems to scale were identified by participant respondents in the joint study produced in partnership between the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor.¹⁶ Respondents to this study, which included non-profits, business, workforce investment boards, state agencies, labor unions, and institutions of higher learning.

¹⁷ <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/tracking-transfer-institutional-state-effectiveness.html>

- e. *Need to Stay Current with Market Trends:* Finally, in order for a pathway to be successful in creating alignment between what students are learning in the classroom and the employment opportunities that are available in the market, there needs to be a mechanism for staying current with market trends.

To address these barriers, there is a need for a multi-level, sector-based approach that leverages existing (and scarce) resources and uses multiple methods to address the needs of all learners, but particularly those that have been identified as disconnected.

The Illinois vision for business-driven solutions speaks to both the need for sustained and diversified investment at the state and regional level in infrastructure and capacity building for programs that support opportunity youth. These programs should use:

- a) sound data that illustrates both the needs of business and opportunity youth to find points of connection;
- b) sector-based approaches that leverage existing networks and resources; and
- c) a combination of public and private funding that demonstrates public commitment to this population and clarifies the role for private investors.

After many years of development, sector strategies can be scaled up to support youth employment statewide. A statewide sector-based support structure creates opportunities for alignment across regions and reduces the potential for duplication and overlap of foundational support activities that need not be localized. A local/regional approach towards strengthening the investment role that employers play creates mechanisms for employers to organize themselves around critical hiring needs. These two types of supports work together to create a uniquely “Illinois” type of system which addresses the very different local/regional needs across Economic Development Regions.¹⁸

Section 6: Recommendations

The recommendations in this section reflect the work of the Task Force over the past year and are driven by the analysis in this report.

1. **Reinvigorate cross-agency and cross-sector statewide supports for career pathway system development under the framework of Illinois Pathways:**

- a. Reconstitute and strengthen the Illinois Pathways Advisory Committee: Follow best practice models to bring together state education, workforce, and economic development systems to support the development of career pathway systems in those sectors that have been identified as crucial to Illinois’ economy in one Advisory Committee, charged with:

¹⁸ Illinois Department of Commerce organizes regional activity according to Economic Development Region. (EDR) <http://www.illinois.gov/dceo/SmallBizAssistance/RegionSpecificAssistance/Pages/default.aspx>

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- i. Improving alignment and performance of Illinois' publicly funded workforce system through the use of regular evaluation of resource alignment and the connection of programs to business needs, as well as the continuous review of program outcomes.
 - ii. Providing strategic direction and guidance in policy in order to improve the state's workforce system (which will include not only service delivery elements funded through WIOA but also other federal and state grants which are intended to support workforce development).
 - iii. Connecting career pathway system development for youth through adult initiatives, particularly through bridge programs.
 - iv. The Illinois Pathways Advisory Committee should meet once per quarter and will be charged with releasing an annual report on activities.
 - b. Reinvigorate statewide sector supports: Develop the capacity of existing statewide sector supports to assist an Advisory Board in:
 - i. Identifying current and future workforce needs of Illinois businesses, including identifying training and credentialing requirements.
 - ii. Expanding access to real-world challenges and work-based learning for all learners.
 - iii. Producing and/or delivering sector-based instructional and professional development resources for training providers and educators.
 - iv. Delivering technical assistance to LWIBs for aligning opportunity youth programs to talent pipeline management programs.
 - v. Managing systems for collaboration across regions which are addressing the same sectors/occupations.
2. **Continue the work of the Youth Task Force, as a function of the IWIB.** This task force should:
 - a. Create and maintain a robust online Learning Community for practitioners: Using existing resources through the Illinois Shared Learning Environment, provide a community forum wherein practitioners can share and learn from each other, which would include an online knowledge base and repository of resources (including a matrix for philanthropic funding resources)¹⁹ through the Open Education Resources (OER) to facilitate the exchange of information.²⁰
 - b. Development of a research agenda and provision of regular updates: Support robust data collection, dissemination, and development of a research agenda around the needs and employment outcomes of opportunity youth.
 - i. Partnering with a research institution, engage in a "deep-dive" on opportunity youth, with a dual focus on publicly and privately funded programs, towards a results oriented report.
 - ii. Increasing the capacity of the existing WDQI project to expand the populations and sectors under study.

¹⁹ An initial sweep of the landscape of philanthropic funding resources is provided at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-mLMZcbKIGEZUI1VFctWUExQnc/view?usp=sharing>

²⁰ An invaluable resource for tools is through the Department of Labor's comprehensive 2015 Career Pathways Toolkit: A Guide for System Development. The DOL has thoughtfully curated all relevant resources in an online repository. <https://cptoolkitcatalog.peerta.acf.hhs.gov/>

- c. Developing an outreach campaign that is interactive and communicates the messages of career pathway systems for multiple audiences, primarily through an interactive website that is regularly maintained.
 - d. Leveraging existing resources, oversee the development and/or co-creation of a WIOA Youth Regional Dashboard that will act as a planning and evaluation tool for Regional EDRs and Local Workforce Innovation Boards.
 - e. Reporting at Illinois Workforce Innovation Board meetings on progress, with particular emphasis on the identified indicators presented in the Illinois Youth Regional Dashboard, as well as the development of tools and resources.
3. **Create Regional Opportunity Youth Systems.** Emphasizing the need to foster ownership and build capacity at the local and regional level, following this report, a Request for Application will be released for the development of Regional Opportunity Youth Systems (organized by Local Workforce Development Boards) and according to Economic Development Region. These Regional Opportunity Youth Systems would be charged with:
- a. Identifying existing intermediary organizations working with Opportunity Youth in each LWIB.
 - b. Assessing to what extent intermediaries are:
 - i. Addressing leading, emerging, and maturing industries for that region
 - ii. Addressing high-demand occupations for regional talent pipeline partnerships
 - iii. Aligned to regional career pathway initiatives, including community college efforts, ICAP, and the 60 by 25 Network, among others
 - c. Developing regional plans to be presented to the Illinois Youth Advisory Council for:
 - i. Aligning opportunity youth programs to leading, emerging, and maturing industries, as well as high-demand occupations for regional Talent Pipeline Management
 - ii. Aligning to other regional career pathway initiatives
 - iii. Developing LWIB-wide sector-based strategies for (i) and (ii)
 - iv. Braiding and blending funding streams
 - v. Ongoing intra-regional collaboration for opportunity youth
 - vi. Development or expansion of pilot programs for opportunity youth. These programs must address the elements of career pathway system development (as identified in Appendix 2). Specifically, for opportunity youth, the pilot programs should be focused on:
 - 1) Creating mechanisms for re-engagement for youth back into the education and employment systems through bridge programs²¹ where appropriate.

²¹ Illinois WIOA Unified State Plan (Draft). January 16, 2016.

<https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Outreach/Pages/StateUnifiedPlan.aspx>

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 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. A common definition of bridge programs has been developed to ensure all core and required partners have a basic understanding of the provisions of services under these programs. The partners will revisit this definition and other policies to ensure that it aligns with current employer and workforce readiness needs. 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 to those individuals who lack basic skills as a way of connecting

- 2) Developing retention strategies for opportunity youth through the provision of concentrated mentorship opportunities (with a goal of 1:1 mentorship), intrusive advising where appropriate, and the use of additional support services coordinated with community partners.

Conclusion

In addition to sector-based career pathway systems as pointed out above, Illinois has made tremendous progress in building the state's longitudinal data systems, which supports the commitments that state agency partners have made to continue to work collaboratively and explore opportunities for service alignment, and has expanded the role of policy in strengthening the support for cohesive career pathway design in House Resolution 477.²² Illinois has also developed a highly dedicated and regionally knowledgeable workforce practitioner base and has worked through various partners to develop expertise for technical assistance on business engagement, work-based learning, labor market information, and best practice models to serve special populations. There are pockets of tremendous regional and local innovation that are ripe for bringing to scale and, of particular interest to the Opportunity Youth Task Force, is the manner in which state level supports make the scaling of local/regional programs easier to implement by providing those resources which would be redundant for each region to produce individually.

with Title I and Title III for training opportunities and with Title IV 3 to ensure those who are basic skill deficient and have learning differences have access tools needed to be successful.²¹

²² <http://www.niu.edu/ilhstocollege/hr-477/index.shtml>

Appendix 1: Youth Task Force Members

Name	Organization	Category
Mike Massie	Chair Massie and Quick	Chair; IWIB member; Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
Angie Mason	Chicago Botanic Garden	IWIB member; Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
Margi Schiemann	Nicor Gas	IWIB member; Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
Scott Frick	Kraft Foods	IWIB member; Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
Marlon McClinton	Utilivate	IWIB member; Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
Greg Sutton	Tec Services	Service Provider
Eduardo Brambila	Illinois Student Assistance Commission	Illinois State Agency
Dr. James Applegate	Illinois Board of Higher Education	Illinois State Agency
Heidi Mueller	Illinois Dept. of Juvenile Justice	Illinois State Agency
Dr. Tiffany Gholson	Illinois Dept. of Children and Family Services	Illinois State Agency
Beverly Walker	Illinois Dept. of Human Services/DRS	Illinois State Agency
Rick Stubblefield	LWIA 24	Local Workforce Investment Board
Greg Martinez	LWIA 7	Local Workforce Investment Board
Mike Scherer	LWIA 21	Local Workforce Investment Board
Jean Ondo	LWIA 25	Local Workforce Investment Board
Dr. Laz Lopez Dr. Marcella Zipp	District 214/ICCB	Service Provider
Kevin Bushur	Workforce Director, CEFS	Service Provider
Germain Castellanos	SHINE Program Director, Waukeegan H.S.	Service Provider
Kurt Beier	Executive Director, First Institute	Service Provider
Nina Harris	Affiliate CEO, Springfield Urban League	Service Provider
Vickie Forby	Executive Director, Emerson Park Development Corp.	Service Provider
Rocki Wilkerson	Adult Education, Decatur Public Schools	Service Provider
Dr. Lisa Diaz	4-H Club Program Director, UIUC Extension	Service Provider
Jack Wuest	Executive Director, Alternative Schools Network	Service Provider
Jen Keeling	Director, Thrive Chicago	Service Provider
Matt Bruce	President, Chicago Workforce Funders Alliance	Service Provider

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Roberto Requejo	Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago	Finance
Sandra Westlund-Deenihan	Quality Float Works	Manufacturing
Matt Eggemeyer	Keats Manufacturing Company	Manufacturing
Kelly Sundberg	Microsoft	Information Technology
Gretchen Koch	CompTIA	Information Technology
Karl Sarpolis	International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers	Labor
Joseph Seliga	Mayer Brown	Legal
Stephanie Wagner	Mayer Brown	Legal
Dr. Andrea Messing-Mathie	NIU Education Systems Center	Academic

Appendix 2: Career Pathway Elements

ELEMENTS	CRITERIA	EVIDENCE/TOOLS	Program Examples
11. PARTNERSHIPS – Partners (who minimally include secondary and postsecondary education, employers, and workforce development boards) plan and commit to leveraging resources to educate, train, support and/or locate employment for individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Partner roles and relationships are defined. b. Partners take shared ownership in the development, improvement, and outcomes/performance of the pathway programs. c. Partners leverage resources to implement pathway programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Statement of Need b. Proposed Scope of Work, Budget c. Partner/Provider Checklist d. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Charter 	The Child Welfare Initiative (CWI) is making human service, juvenile justice, and workforce systems more integrated and inclusive for youth in foster care and probation. The Los Angeles-based CWI is helping older and former foster and probation youth access valuable employment services and opportunities by removing policy and practice barriers, and implementing shared case management models that address the individual educational and employment needs of youth.
12. BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT – Employers play a leadership role in developing and managing career pathway programs to ensure the careers are high demand/higher skill at the local and/or state level, content is current, and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Employers participate in regular meetings/discussions about pathway programs. b. Employers share views on local, regional, and state labor market needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Meeting minutes b. Business checklist c. HR inventory d. Menu/continuum of options for business engagement e. Robust Needs Assessment f. Business Partner 	LeadersUp talent development programs have lowered interview-to-hire ratios from the industry norm of 18:1 to 3:1. Established in 2013 by the Starbucks Corporation and

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ELEMENTS	CRITERIA	EVIDENCE/TOOLS	Program Examples
<p>work-based learning opportunities are integrated throughout the pathway experience.</p>	<p>related to pathway programs expected job openings and changing skill requirements.</p> <p>c. Employers offer work-based learning experiences to pathway program participants.</p>	<p>Checklist</p>	<p>launched by some of its leading U.S. suppliers, LeadersUp engages businesses to connect opportunity youth to pathways that lead to middle-skilled careers, increase business leadership that creates community impact, and develop and share innovative and effective evidence-based practices.</p>
<p>13. CREDENTIALS, CERTIFICATIONS, and/or POSTSECONDARY ACCESS-- Career pathway programs lead to the attainment of a recognized post-secondary credential consisting of an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State involved or Federal Government, or an associate or Baccalaureate degree with opportunities to obtain advanced standing throughout the pipeline e.g., early college credit, etc.</p>	<p>a. Recognized credentials are defined at all stages of the pathway.</p> <p>b. Connections between the pathway credentials are clearly defined including how they can be stacked and built upon for career and educational advancement.</p> <p>c. Opportunities for advanced placement, e.g. early college credit, are available throughout the pathway.</p>	<p>a. Marketing strategy (value of credentials/cert.)</p> <p>b. Career Pathway visual/map</p> <p>c. Articulation agreement</p> <p>d. Program Participant/Student Checklist</p> <p>e. Career Pathway map</p>	<p>Through career development, job readiness training, postsecondary education preparation, and multiple opportunities for college visits, Waukegan SHINE participants are helped to be proactive in pursuing education or a future career. They have the opportunity to shadow professionals in Lake County through internships, create an Individual Development Plan for themselves, and track their progress towards success. Students learn time management and how to be financially responsible young adults. Students exit the SHINE program knowing what key sector they want to work in and what credentials they need to be successful in that field</p>
<p>14. HIGH DEMAND/HIGHER</p>	<p>a. Labor market</p>	<p>a. LMI</p>	<p>High school students in</p>

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ELEMENTS	CRITERIA	EVIDENCE/TOOLS	Program Examples
<p>SKILL--Career pathway programs address high-demand industries and occupations that meet state, regional and local youth earnings goals and provide career advancement opportunities to higher skill and higher earnings jobs.</p>	<p>information substantiates career pathway program and addresses in-demand industries and occupations.</p> <p>b. Targeted entry-level jobs meet state, regional, and local youth earnings goals.</p>	<p>b. Validation documentation by employers</p>	<p>Illinois school district 214's Information Technology Career Pathway program receive a college-preparatory education that strengthens core understandings and develops research, inquiry, and problem-solving skills in a technology-focused program. A 16-week internship program teaches students about different career paths and immerses them in real-world learning environments.</p>
<p>15. WORK-BASED LEARNING-- Career pathway programs include opportunities to experience the workplace through related paid or unpaid internships, apprenticeships, or student organization activities.</p>	<p>a. A continuum of work-based learning opportunities are available throughout the pathway.</p> <p>b. Work-based learning opportunities are structured with coordination between the business and the service provider, e.g. WDS, College, School, etc.</p>	<p>a. Agreements with employers for Work Based Learning/OJT/Subsidized Employment/Internship</p> <p>b. Structured coordination strategy</p>	<p>The YouthBuild program model has provided low-income young adults a pathway towards completing their secondary education and gaining job skills. With 260 local programs across the U.S., including Illinois chapters in East St. Louis and Marion, YouthBuild enrolls low-income young men and who have left high school without a diploma and are unemployed or underemployed. A full-time program typically lasts 10 months, with students spending half their time on a construction site learning construction skills by building affordable housing for homeless and low-income people in their communities.</p>

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ELEMENTS	CRITERIA	EVIDENCE/TOOLS	Program Examples
<p>16. INDIVIDUAL CAREER/EMPLOYMENT PLANS— Based on career information access, Individual career/employment plans are developed for participants who enter pathway programs that outline the individual goals and path of coursework/experiences needed for each individual to be successful in the attainment of those goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A Career Information System is used. b. Career plan/employment plans are developed for all career pathway participants. c. Career advisement is available to all pathway participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CIS overview b. Individual Career Plan/ Individual Learning Plan prototype c. Strategy description of career advisement 	<p>The Dartmouth IPS (Individual Placement and Support) Employment Center has defined the IPS approach to supported employment which helps clients in community mental health services become part of the competitive labor market. IPS is nearly three times more effective than other vocational approaches in helping people with mental illness to work competitively. The IPS model uses a multidisciplinary team approach to provide individualized services. Practitioners collaborate with state vocational rehabilitation counselors who focus on each person’s strengths to promote recovery and long lasting services by focusing on each person’s strengths.</p>
<p>17. INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTS--A comprehensive set of support services have been identified that may be accessed based on the individual needs of each pathway program participant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A comprehensive set of support services can be accessed as needed by pathway participants. b. IRT’s are established for individuals with significant support needs to coordinate/ leverage resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Description of available support services and opportunities to access b. IRT notes/Transition Planning notes – WorkNet 	<p>Illinois is working to create a seamless education and employment service delivery model for youth with disabilities that can ultimately become the standard for the state. The Illinois Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) will provide implementation support from on-site Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs).</p>

ELEMENTS	CRITERIA	EVIDENCE/TOOLS	Program Examples
			<p>The role of the DRC is to develop the partnership network around the WIOA centers to expand their capacity to assist job seekers with disabilities and to structure service delivery under the project. The project, Illinois WorkNet, the state’s online workforce development portal, has created a DEI interface for customized case management and Integrated Resource Teams.</p>
<p>18. CONTEXTUALIZED LEARNING AND WORK-BASED SKILLS--Pathway program instruction relates to real-world, real-life situations and experiences. Application of learning is a primary focus with integrated content of related academics, technical skills and soft skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Pathway program content integrates related academics with technical skills and soft skills. b. Pathway program addresses work-based skills. c. Pathway instruction is focused on relevant application of related academics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Curriculum content standards and pathway curriculum/course map b. Work-based skills listing 	<p>Year Up is a one-year intensive training program that provides low-income young adults, with a combination of hands-on skill development, college credits, corporate internships, and support. For the first six months of the program, students develop technical and professional skills in the classroom. Students then apply those skills during the second six months on an internship at one of Year Up’s corporate partners.</p>
<p>19. MEASURING RESULTS & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT METHODOLOGY--Pathway programs measure results on core youth measures* and use them to improve performance through</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A continuous improvement process is in use with the career pathway programs. b. Processes for ‘quick’ change/ improvement are in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Description of data driven improvement strategy b. Performance results on required measures c. Strategies for 	<p>Since 1999, i.c.stars has been providing rigorous information technology-based workforce development and leadership training for low-income adults in</p>

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ELEMENTS	CRITERIA	EVIDENCE/TOOLS	Program Examples
<p>evidence-based practices to remain responsive to the needs of the pathway participant and the employment community.</p>	<p>place based on program performance results.</p> <p>c. A data collection and analysis strategy is in place with opportunities to share and discuss information between/among service provide.</p> <p>d. State definition of Measurable Skills Gain.</p>	<p>making change in pathway content/ experiences.</p> <p>d. State-Defined “Measurable Skills Gain” tool.</p> <p>e. Revisiting scope, checklists</p>	<p>the Chicago area. A variety of metrics are used to measure performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial placement rate: 95% • Industry retention rate: 81% • College attendance rate: 44% • Average 12-month earnings before program: \$9,846 <p>Average 12-month earnings after program: \$57,240</p>