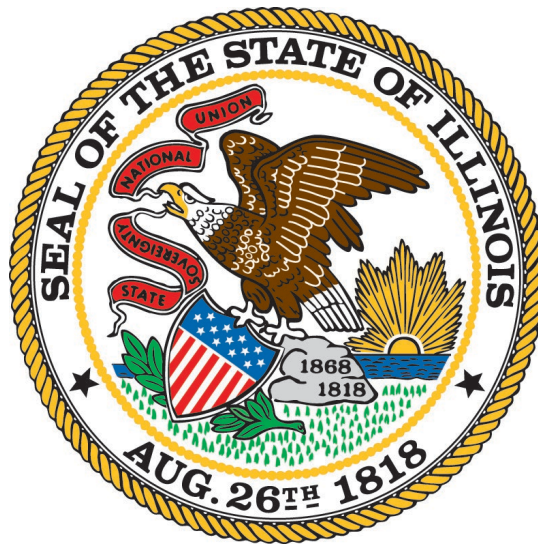# An Action Agenda for Workforce Development and Job Creation

Response to Illinois Executive Order 2019-03

April 2019

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An Action Agenda for Workforce Development and Job Creation
Response to Illinois Executive Order 2019-03

Executive Summary

Governor Pritzker's Executive Order 2019-03 directs Illinois' State agencies to review current and potential industries targeted for economic growth and recommend how workforce resources can be better aligned to serve disenfranchised populations in communities throughout Illinois. In response, the four agencies that play a prominent role in the State's workforce development efforts got together to prepare an agenda that will create opportunities for all Illinoisans.

The agenda presented in this report is drawn from evidence-based practices, promising innovations, and collaborative input from leaders across the state, with the goal of ensuring that businesses, individuals, and communities across the state have the opportunity to prosper and contribute to the state's economic growth.

Three broad action areas, 10 related strategies, and 37 proposed action steps are presented in this report and summarized below.

Action Area 1: Unite workforce development partners around regional cluster strategies
Regional cluster strategies will focus resources on the industries with the highest potential to add jobs and increase prosperity in regions across Illinois. These strategies bring together the public and private sectors in each region to build on their unique strengths.

1. *Identify high-impact regional clusters and associated in-demand occupations*
   a. Use the upcoming planning cycle to identify promising clusters for future growth in Illinois.
   b. Engage local and regional partners in selecting regional clusters.
   c. Reconvene the WRAP committee to develop an approach for establishing target occupational/career pathway clusters.
2. *Implement coordinated workforce development strategies around regional clusters*
   a. Convene employers, foundations, and regional institutions to help lead sector partnerships and make coordinated investments.
   b. Require alignment of public investments in high-demand industries and occupations.
3. *Strengthen workforce development in all parts of the state*
   a. Develop a directory of existing talent pipeline management projects and other employer-driven sector strategies.
   b. Expand employer-led workforce development projects to high-growth sectors in all regions in Illinois.
   c. Partner with information technology firms and others that can bring new economic and workforce development models and opportunities to rural Illinois.

Action Area 2: Prepare Illinois workers for a career, not just their next job
Regardless of background, life circumstances, or education level, Illinois workers can be prepared for high-demand careers by developing core academic, technical, and essential employability skills throughout their lifetimes.

1. *Increase apprenticeship opportunities*
   a. Use the Accenture/AON/Zurich approach to initiate pilot apprenticeship programs throughout Illinois.
   b. Evaluate Illinois' new apprenticeship intermediaries and navigators to ensure they maintain best practices and get results.

  c. Provide an apprenticeship tax credit to incentivize apprenticeships at small and medium-sized businesses.

  d. Conduct research on effective apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship practices and share results with trainers and industry leaders.

2. ***Address barriers to successful training and employment***

  a. Scale up the use of Integrated Education and Training models to help adults get their GED and work on other basic skills while getting credentials for in-demand occupations.

  b. Improve data collection and program evaluation to identify the needs of job-seekers with barriers to employment and the most cost-effective ways to remove them.

  c. Provide career training and apprenticeship opportunities to inmates re-entering the workforce.

3. ***Establish and support equity goals***

  a. Disaggregate data by race, gender, and target population to reveal disparities in policies and programs.

  b. Compel advisory and oversight boards/councils to set equity goals and prepare action plans to achieve them.

  c. Expose more high school students, particularly young women and minorities, to careers in STEM fields.

  d. Expand mentor programs to adults undergoing career transitions.

  e. Equip workforce program staff with training on data-driven approaches to address equity gaps.

Action Area 3: Connect job seekers with employers

Illinois businesses can find the productive workers they need through more efficient training and better services for job seekers and employers.

1. ***Shorten time from credential to employment***

  a. Scale up dual credit programs to give high schoolers an early start on college credits.

  b. Inform college and university students about prior learning assessments so they do not need to repeat coursework to get credit.

  c. Identify workers who may quickly qualify for in-demand occupations.

  d. Ensure licensing requirements for in-demand occupations are portable.

  e. Require training providers to publish important information for prospective trainees, such as training requirements, expectations, and typical outcomes.

2. ***Use smart online tools to connect job-seekers to valuable information and programs that work***

  a. Expand access to information that helps job-seekers make better decisions about training programs.

  b. Develop Illinois Pro Path into an online front door to workforce resources for job seekers and current workers.

  c. Minimize duplication and invest strategically in the State's data resources.

  d. Develop a statewide education and workforce research and evaluation agenda that informs which programs receive resources and are offered to job seekers and employers.

  e. Coordinate data collection from Illinois businesses to improve information sharing and save time for businesses and state agencies.

  f. Move online tools that assist in proactive targeting from development to testing and production.

3. ***Integrate workforce services for job seekers***

  a. Fast track the implementation of the IWIB's new workforce service integration policy.

  b. Provide training and technical assistance to One-Stop Centers to help implement service integration.

  c. Provide regular integration progress reports to identify needed course corrections and additional implementation resources.

4. ***Give employers easy access to the skilled workforce they need***

  a. For companies relocating or expanding in Illinois, provide comprehensive and customized training and recruitment services.

  b. Prioritize the development of talent pipeline projects in rural areas.

  c. Prioritize workforce development within efforts to improve infrastructure and quality of life in rural areas.

Introduction

Governor Pritzker's Executive Order 2019-03 directs Illinois' State agencies to review current and potential industries targeted for economic growth and recommend how workforce resources for disenfranchised populations may be improved in communities throughout Illinois. In response, the four State agencies involved in implementing the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – the Departments of Commerce, Employment Security, and Human Services and the Illinois Community College Board – and representatives of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board met to identify evidence-based practices and models that had a good chance of success in Illinois. They also identified innovations in Illinois and other states that hold promise for achieving our workforce and job creation goals and serving disenfranchised populations. These ideas have been shared with a cross-section of business, labor, civic, education, and workforce leaders at the state and local level to solicit their ideas and suggestions. The results are presented in this report as an action agenda for consideration by the Pritzker Administration.

Three action areas and related strategies are recommended as the focus of the State's workforce efforts going forward:

Unite workforce development partners around regional cluster strategies
- Identify high-impact regional clusters and associated in-demand occupations
- Implement coordinated workforce development strategies around regional clusters
- Strengthen workforce development in all parts of the state

Prepare Illinois workers for a career, not just their next job
- Increase apprenticeship opportunities
- Address barriers to successful training and employment
- Establish and support equity goals

Connect job seekers with employers
- Shorten time from credential to employment
- Use smart online tools to connect job-seekers to valuable information and programs that work
- Integrate workforce services for job seekers
- Give employers easy access to the skilled workforce they need

 A definition of Disenfranchised Individuals is provided in Appendix A. Demographic and employment information about the state and its ten economic development regions is included in Appendix B. Of interest is Table B-14, which contains the labor force participation rates in each of the State's 10 Economic Development Regions. The converse of this statistic – the non-participation rate – is the number that should be a central focus of workforce planning as it represents the percentage of people who are neither working nor actively looking for work. With the right outreach, skills training, and support services, many of the individuals making up this pool of non-participants could be an important part of the talent solution.

Learning from Our Past

Charting a new course for Illinois' economic future requires that we learn from the past. We must scale up practices that have proven effective,[1] re-engineer those that have not delivered on promised success, and abandon those with little to no return. Six lessons learned will help guide our path forward and form the basis for our goals.

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

2. The skills gap is arguably Illinois' most serious barrier to economic prosperity, yet it has not been addressed as a top State priority. Building a pool of job seekers and workers with the right skills at the right time is essential if Illinois business and workers are to compete in the global economy today and in the future.

3. Our job creation efforts must be statewide and extend to employers of all sizes. Effective economic development strategies are needed in urban and rural areas alike and must reach beyond the headline-grabbing financial incentive packages intended to lure corporate headquarters to our state. We must also recognize that almost two-thirds of the nation's private sector workforce are employed by small business. Strategies to stabilize, retain, and grow this bedrock of our economy are urgently needed throughout Illinois.

4. All our investments must generate an acceptable return on investment. These returns must be measured in terms of outcomes most meaningful to Illinois residents – such as jobs, earnings, and long-term career prospects – not just in dollars spent or number of participants. We must be accountable for how we invest our scarce public resources and the initiatives in which we ask our partners to co-invest.

5. Programs to prepare individuals for the workplace too often ignore the harsh economic realities of low-income populations. Education and training models that offer an "earn as you learn" component enable economically at-risk populations to acquire new skills while supporting themselves and their families. For others, support for childcare and transportation can mean the difference between advancing on a career pathway or remaining in poverty.

6. The system-level change we envision will require that all State agencies with a stake in education, job creation, or workforce development support each other. We need to align our services, program eligibility, funding, and even basic terminology so we do not work at cross-purposes.

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[1] In Appendix C, we show a list of programs that we identify throughout the report as successful initiatives that should be expanded or used as models for future Illinois efforts.

Measuring Progress

A number of metrics will be used to track progress of the proposals in this report by the core agency partners, and, to the extent feasible, by other agencies providing workforce supports. According to the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act, "primary indicators of performance" must be reported at the state and local levels. To track our progress, state agencies will report these outcomes for target subgroups of job seekers – including rural residents and the disenfranchised populations detailed in Appendix A – and will track them over a longer time horizon than is required by federal guidelines. Taken as a whole, the strategies described in this report should improve these indicators over time.

1. Employment rate – six months, one and five years after program completion
2. Median earnings – six months, one and five years after program completion
3. Credential attainment
4. Measurable skills gains
5. Effectiveness serving employers
    a. Retention with the same employer
    b. Employer penetration rate

Other metrics will track specific components of this agenda. For example:

6. Number of apprentices and number of firms employing apprentices, including minority and women-owned businesses
7. Enrollment in dual credit programs
8. Number of employees who participate in employer-supported training
9. Number of employers involved in employer-led sector programs, particularly in rural regions of Illinois

In addition to these metrics, the report recommends more in-depth evaluation of the effectiveness of publicly funded policies and programs.

Action Area 1: Unite workforce development partners around regional cluster strategies

A targeted industry, or cluster-based, economic development strategy builds on existing industry concentrations and related assets. High sector concentrations increase the competitiveness of firms by providing access to supports such as transportation, financing, and education and training services. An important component of a successful industry cluster is the specialized skills developed by the local workforce. Workers with specialized skills in a cluster tend to earn higher wages.

Specialized industry clusters in more rural parts of the state, while important to their local economies, may not be apparent in an analysis of statewide data. As a result, the cluster identification process should occur in each of the State's Economic Development Regions to determine the economic drivers in each.

Targeted regional clusters (groups of similar firms) determine in-demand occupations (groups of similar jobs) in that region. Public sector training funds are guided by in-demand occupations. Ensuring these training investments align with economic development activities will give the highest chance of success for both efforts.

Once in-demand industries and occupations are identified, employers from all the represented sectors should be brought together to help lead workforce development efforts. This ensures that training programs are targeted and demand-driven, giving training completers better job opportunities and providing businesses with the talent they need.

Strategy: Identify high-impact regional clusters and associated in-demand occupations
All Illinois education, workforce, and economic development agencies must agree to use a common set of key state and regional level target industries and occupational/career pathway clusters as a baseline for discussion. While there is overlap between the clusters on which Illinois agencies currently focus, they do not completely align. By agreeing to focus resources on specific clusters, the state can create a competitive advantage in emerging industries and make economic development efforts more effective. Leading companies in concentrations of high-potential clusters act as a magnet for talent, related businesses, robust infrastructure, and innovation.

It is important to recognize that regional economies vary significantly across Illinois and important industries for local areas may not be evident in analyses of statewide data. For example, finance and insurance are important in the Bloomington-Normal area, heavy machinery manufacturing in Peoria, and aerospace components in the Rockford region. These strengths should be reflected in regional target industry sectors.

WIOA regulations require that training funds only be used for training that leads to employment in a "demand occupation." While states use different methodologies to determine demand occupations, in general they are expected to have large numbers of future job openings and average wages above some minimum standard. Illinois and other states have focused their workforce development efforts on occupation clusters.

Education and career pathways in Illinois are an integrated collection of programs and services intended to develop students' core academic, technical, and employability skills; provide them with continuous education and training; and place them in high-demand, high-opportunity jobs. Illinois Pathways builds off the National Career Clusters® Framework and supports career pathway systems in science, technology, engineering, and math. The pathways are a basis for clusters of specific occupations or careers grouped together because they share similar interests, strengths, and skills[2].

Examples
Illinois' target clusters have changed over time as the economy has evolved. A few core industries have remained a part of the State's economic development efforts over the past 10 years:

- Advanced manufacturing, including advanced materials and fabricated metals

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[2] https://www.illinoisworknet.com/ilpathways/Pages/default.aspx

- Agribusiness and food processing
- Transportation, distribution, and logistics
- Biotechnology
- Energy and clean energy

In addition, several other industries have been identified as significant in one or more economic or workforce development plans:

- Professional and business services
- Healthcare
- Information technology
- Financial activities
- Leisure and hospitality

Illinois' Eligible Training Provider policy defines the method for choosing demand occupations. The current set of demand occupations was developed in 2009 using criteria that consider regional demand (entry wage and average job openings), statewide demand, whether the occupation is on the Illinois Career Pathways Career Clusters list, designation as a priority occupation, and evidence supporting regional need.

Based on these criteria, 533 occupations are on the current demand occupation list of at least one Economic Development Region. Most of the occupations are on the list because they are included in a career cluster.

Proposed Action Steps
a. Use the upcoming planning cycle to identify promising clusters for future growth in Illinois.
b. Engage local and regional partners in selecting regional clusters.
c. Reconvene the Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeships and Pathways Committee to develop a unified State approach for establishing target occupational/career pathway clusters across public education and workforce funding streams. These will align with the target industries to be identified in DCEO's 2019 Illinois Economic Development Plan required by the Illinois General Assembly.

Strategy: Implement coordinated workforce development strategies around regional clusters

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

Example

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

Proposed Action Steps

a. Convene employers, foundations, and regional institutions to help lead sector partnerships and make coordinated investments.
b. Legislatively require alignment of public investments in high-demand industries and occupations.

Strategy: Strengthen workforce development in all parts of the state

A key component of Illinois' many workplace and education plans is the central role of employer-driven sector strategies in the implementation of regional workforce development initiatives. Coordinating economic and workforce development efforts is critical because surveys of business executives consistently rate the availability of skilled labor as the top site selection factor, ahead of other considerations such as real estate costs, tax rates, or financial incentives.[3]

Over the course of the past decade, Illinois has been exploring how talent pipeline management strategies can be used to identify employer needs and communicate them to education and training providers. This talent pipeline management model, pioneered in Illinois by Vermilion Advantage, applies principles of supply chain management to the development of talent within regions and across individual businesses. Employers are engaged in analyzing talent supply and demand and identifying skill and competency requirements and credentials. Clear communication between sector businesses and their education and training partners is essential to ensuring that trainees meet employers' hiring expectations and job placement and retention outcomes are improved. The needs of minority and women-owned businesses must be considered as these strategies are designed and implemented.

Examples

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

Illinois' flagship industry sector model, Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing (ATIM), involved a crosscutting team of manufacturers, education entities, and workforce partners that worked with

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[3] *Area Development* Annual Corporate Survey. *Area Development* is a trade journal focused on corporate site selection and relocation.

manufacturing companies to identify their skill needs and accelerate movement from training to employment. A rigorous evaluation[4] of the program found that ATIM participants were three times more likely to attain certifications and earned five times as many certificates as the general workforce. The result of this pilot was increased training certification with participants having an employment rate 10 percent higher than non-participants and about 20 percent higher earnings. These and other evaluation findings are invaluable lessons learned in designing and strengthening other sector partnership programs.

Information technology companies are using the flexibility of digitally networked offices to increase career pathway opportunities in rural areas. Pillar, a technology consulting firm recently acquired by Accenture, is expanding office locations throughout the U.S. Their latest location is in rural Iowa and will add 25-30 more employees at that location. Pillar plans to begin a software development workforce training program in collaboration with area K-12 school districts and a community college.

Proposed Action Steps
a. Develop a directory of existing talent pipeline management projects and other employer-driven sector strategies used to support and grow regional economies. Such a directory would provide a base of information and best practices to encourage and support new sector-based projects.
b. Support the expansion of employer-led workforce development projects to all sectors and regions in Illinois. Information about the workforce development resources described in this report will help ensure these employers have the skilled workers they need to stay and grow in Illinois, and workers have access to well-paying jobs in careers with a future.
c. Partner with information technology firms and others that can bring new economic and workforce development models and opportunities to rural Illinois.

Action Area 2: Prepare Illinois workers for a career, not just their next job

Career pathways prepare individuals for high demand, high opportunity jobs by developing their core academic, technical, and essential employability skills over a lifetime. Illinois, a national leader in career pathways, has adopted a shared definition of career pathways[5] across workforce and education systems that helps practitioners implement these types of programs. This policy work, guided by the Illinois Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeships and Pathways (WRAP) committee and approved by the State's workforce and education boards, lays out a shared vision of career pathways with these features:

- Aligns with the skill needs of industries
- Includes work-based learning experiences such as internships, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training opportunities
- Prepares an individual to be successful in a range of secondary or postsecondary education options
- Includes counseling to support individual education and career goals

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[4] Betesh, Hannah, Hui Kim, Deborah Kogan, Rachel Lindy, Anne Paprocki (2017). Evaluation of Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing (ATIM): Final Impact Report. Social Policy Research Associates
[5] *Career Pathways Dictionary: A Unified Framework for College and Career Readiness and Success*, download available at https://edsystemsniu.org/illinois-launches-career-pathways-dictionary/

- Accelerates educational and career advancement by organizing education, training, and other services to meet individual needs
- Helps an individual enter or advance in a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Strategy: Increase apprenticeship opportunities

Apprenticeship is a flexible training strategy that can be customized to meet the needs of most businesses. It is an employer-driven model that combines on-the-job learning with related classroom instruction that increases an apprentice's skill level and wages. Importantly, apprenticeship is an "earn and learn" model in that apprentices receive a paycheck from day one and earn wages while they learn on the job. While successfully used for decades in skilled trades and production occupations, apprenticeships also can fill workforce needs in other fields that historically have required four-year degrees, such as healthcare, insurance, and information technology.

Apprenticeship intermediaries and navigators have emerged as an important new approach for expanding the number of apprenticeship programs.   Intermediaries bundle the needs of small and medium sized businesses and then sponsor and manage apprenticeship programs for these employers. Apprenticeship navigators serve as key points of contact in the region for outreach and partnership development to help expand apprenticeship programs.

Examples

In 2017, Accenture, AON, and Zurich North America established the Chicago Apprenticeship Network to team up with community colleges and Chicago-based non-profits to design apprenticeship programs in information technology, insurance, and human resources.[6] Since then, Accenture has grown its program from five to 27 apprentices, with many becoming permanent, full-time employees. AON has hired 25 apprentices per year since 2016. Zurich, whose apprentices are considered full-time employees from day one, has also hired about 25 per year. All three companies aim to diversify their workforce through their apprenticeship programs. Students earn an Associate of Applied Science degree and an industry recognized DOL Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion in their field while gaining on-the-job work experience. Today this employer-led apprenticeship network has grown to include more than 20 companies all working to design their own apprenticeship programs. The Network's goal is 1,000 apprentices by 2020.

In early 2019, DCEO funded 10 organizations to serve as apprenticeship intermediaries, navigators, or both to expand existing and create new apprenticeship programs. This investment is modeled after the experience of other states in using apprenticeship navigators and intermediaries. For example, since hiring five apprenticeship navigators in 2016, Maryland has added 47 new programs, reactivated 23 programs, and approved 265 occupations (110 of which currently have active apprentices) and 6 pre-apprenticeship programs. South Carolina has six full-time navigators who were instrumental in increasing the number of active apprentices from 800 in 2007 to over 17,000 by 2017. These states also enacted $1,000 tax credits as an incentive to employ apprentices.

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[6] Chicago Apprentice Network (2018). *Bridging the Gap between Talent and Opportunity: An Apprenticeship Playbook for Professional Jobs*.

Proposed Action Steps
a. Use the Accenture/AON/Zurich approach to initiate pilot apprenticeship programs throughout Illinois.
b. Evaluate Illinois' new apprenticeship intermediaries and navigators to ensure they maintain best practices and get results.
c. Provide an apprenticeship tax credit to incentivize apprenticeships at small and medium-sized businesses.
d. Conduct research on effective apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship practices and share results with trainers and industry leaders.

Strategy: Address barriers to successful training and employment

Individuals with multiple barriers to employment often require more than a referral to an occupational training program to successfully prepare for a career pathway. For many unemployed and underemployed people, assistance with childcare, transportation, physical and mental health care, employability skills training, and other essential support services can mean the difference between advancing on a career pathway or remaining in poverty. For others, financial assistance may be needed to provide household income while they are in training. Asking individuals directly about their barriers and goals is the best way to identify the resources most helpful in addressing their challenges.

Recognizing that job seekers in Illinois may confront barriers to employment, a wide array of education and training models are being implemented to address these diverse needs. Many combine foundational, employability, and occupational skill training, while others speak to the unique situations of ex-offenders, young people aging out of foster care, homeless individuals, or others who face difficult life situations. It is essential that Illinois provide disenfranchised populations and others who have experienced limited economic opportunity with the career and support services they need to succeed.

Examples

The Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Program is a partnership between the Illinois Departments of Corrections, Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Employment Security, Human Services, and the Illinois Community College Board to reduce recidivism by providing life skills, career readiness, and occupational training to inmates prior to release. Since 2017, 233 inmates have participated in essential skills training, cognitive behavior therapy, high school equivalency/GED courses (if applicable), technical education, work experience within the institution, and job search. To date, 16 inmates have graduated with a welding certificate from Black Hawk Community College and are employed in their home communities. A recent study by the Government Performance Lab of the Harvard Kennedy School identified four practices of high performing career and technical education programs operating within correctional systems: offering demand-driven courses and merging resources across state workforce agencies; building programs around nationally recognize certifications, targeting limited seats to the right students; and fostering direct communication with employers.[7]

The St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department is working with Southern Illinois University's Head Start/Early Head Start program in Edwardsville to fill early childhood development associate

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[7] Pagano, J. Innovations in High Performing Career and Technical Education for Correctional Settings.

positions by developing a career pathway for parents who use Head Start services. St. Clair County government manages an apprenticeship program that offers participating parents a job and a credential, and St. Clair County encourages them to continue their education by using federal workforce funding to obtain an associate degree.

More than 100,000 individuals in Illinois participating in the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) are able-bodied adults without dependents. Connecting these individuals to workforce training keeps them eligible for their benefits while they address their barriers to employability, but there are far fewer training opportunities than people who need them. Lessons learned from the State's recent EPIC (Employment Opportunities, Personalized Services, Individualized Training, and Career Planning) pilot that assisted underemployed and unemployed SNAP recipients in five Illinois regions will be useful in connecting these individuals to career preparation activities while they receive needed public assistance.

The Illinois Department of Human Services: Rehabilitation Services' partnership with the University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign's E3 (Educate, Empower and Employ) project identifies and serves young adults with disabilities who have been arrested, spent time in jail or prison, or who are aging out of foster care. E3 provides training to help community agencies identify and connect people with disabilities with vocational rehabilitation services. E3 has helped provide services to 164 individuals who are in foster care or recently aged out, 78 ex-offenders under 25 years of age, and 374 ex-offenders who are 25 or older.

Illinois is a national leader in Integrated Education and Training (IET), an adult educational strategy that primarily assists those without a high school diploma, English language learners, or those with basic skills deficiency with goal oriented, relevant, practical knowledge. IET combines adult education basic skills with career and technical education training designed to provide college credit and industry recognized credentials. This approach can offset the opportunity costs of education for individuals with family and work responsibilities by offering education leading to educational and economic mobility. For example, several community colleges serving large communities of English language learners have redesigned their curriculum to teach career and technical education concurrently and contextually leading to an industry recognized certificate. In a similar vein, "bridge programs" such as one at Jane Addams Resource Center (JARC), which combines math and reading with occupational training, are helping low-skill individuals launch a career in manufacturing. JARC graduates 91% of their trainees and 93% of those find full-time employment[8]. Trainees move from an average annual salary of $9,675 at program entry to nearly $33,000 in their first year of employment. Other Illinois community colleges use the Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System model that blends adult education with career and technical education for college credit for students without a high school diploma or who lack basic skills.

Proposed Action Steps
a. Scale up the use of Integrated Education and Training models throughout Illinois to allow more adults to complete their high school equivalency and increase basic skills and English language

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[8] Jane Addams Resource Center (2018). *New skills. New path. Renewed life.*

acquisition while earning postsecondary and industry-recognized credentials that lead to in-demand occupations.

b. Collect ROI and qualitative outcome data for various education and training programs, identify barriers to enrollment, and identify the most cost-effective approaches to taking down those barriers or helping residents overcome them. This data should break out the impact for disenfranchised populations.

c. Provide career training and apprenticeship opportunities to inmates re-entering the workforce. Collaborate with the Vocational Program Subcommittee at the Illinois Department of Corrections to expand the Kewanee model statewide to increase the number of sustainable, industry-driven career pathways that prepare inmates with in-demand skills while incarcerated and connect those individuals to jobs, support services, and ongoing education upon release.

Strategy: Establish and support equity goals.

As the unemployment rate has declined in recent years, businesses are finding it more difficult to find qualified workers. At the same time, labor force participation is at historic lows. Preparing workers to meet the needs of business while connecting them to viable career pathways in Illinois' most vibrant industries will lead to economic prosperity at all levels. An important focus of these efforts must be ensuring that disenfranchised populations have access to these employment opportunities. Achieving equitable workforce outcomes for all Illinoisans will require thoughtful, concrete, and coordinated action by the agencies charged with delivering these programs and related supports. Providing opportunities to young people can start them on a promising career pathway and help position them for a lifetime of success.

Setting specific, measurable equity goals for all workforce programs receiving federal or state funds is needed to ensure that disparities in access, employment, and earnings for underserved populations will no longer be masked by aggregate performance data. Publicly accountable advisory and oversight boards and councils must play a key role by adopting equity goals and plans to achieve them. Once goals are set, resources must be secured to pursue them.

Examples

The Illinois Science and Technology Institute connects professionals in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields with high school classrooms through its Mentor Matching Engine, a web platform that offers high quality mentoring experiences that overcome geographic barriers.

The Greater Oak Brook Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with other local business and educational organizations, matched young STEM business leaders with 40 students from a culturally and economically diverse high school. The young business leaders and high school students participated in eight weeks of STEM simulations. Pre and post survey results showed a significant increase in the students' appreciation for the important of essential workplace readiness skills.

Pathways to Results (PTR) focuses on improving transitions to and through high school to postsecondary education and into employment by addressing inequities in student outcomes. Supported by the Illinois Community College Board and the Office of Community College Research and Leadership, all 48 Illinois

community colleges are working with employers and support service providers to improve student success. For the past few years, PTR has utilized a two-year approach with year one focused on planning and year two on implementation. For example, in year one of its PTR process, Rock Valley College (RVC) identified an opportunity to strengthen how it uses data to evaluate career and technical education (CTE) programs offered by the college, including the identification of equity gaps. In year two of PTR, RVC made improvements centered on new professional development modules and adoption of a new advisory committee model that better reflected its CTE programs.

Proposed Action Steps

a. Disaggregate data by race, gender, and target population to reveal where disparities and inequities exist in policies and programs.
b. Compel advisory and oversight boards/councils to set equity goals and prepare action plans to achieve them.
c. Expose more high school students, particularly young women and minorities, to careers in STEM fields.
d. Explore how effective mentor programs can be expanded to adults, particularly those who are displaced and moving to a new career. Colorado's Governor's Coaching Corps provides coaches with the tools and training they need to help job seekers in a rapidly changing labor market and could serve as a model for Illinois.
e. Provide training to workforce program staff on data-driven approaches to address equity gaps. Make these data-driven approaches to addressing equity gaps easily accessible to workforce staff and educators through custom tools and professional development.

Action Area 3: Connect job seekers with employers

The urgency of addressing unmet business talent needs and the rising costs of education are putting pressure on first-time job entrants and career changers alike to more quickly acquire needed education and training and find employment. Ensuring that job seekers have the support and tools to plan and complete their education and training as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible will speed up their entry into the job market. Similarly, providing job seekers and workers with accurate and up-to-date information about career opportunities helps them make good decisions and embark on in-demand career pathways.

Strategy: Shorten time from credential to employment

There are several ways to shorten the time from education and training to the labor market. One is to acquire multiple needed credentials at the same time. Such opportunities are made available to high school students and adults who can earn a high school diploma or equivalency certificate while working toward an occupational credential. Such "dual credit" programs motivate young people and adult learners alike to complete their high school education by providing early credentials that give them a leg up in the job market.

Another opportunity to shorten the time to employment is to expand the use of Prior Learning Assessments (PLAs) to credential workers who have gained skills through experience. The Credit for

Prior Learning Act permits Illinois public universities and community colleges to award academic credit for learning acquired outside of a traditional classroom setting.

Job seekers with marketable skills may be able to find employment that requires little or no additional training. Career counselors can assist on demand workers, mature workers, and the underemployed in matching their current skill sets with the hiring requirements of local employers.

Professional licensing requirements can restrict access to certain professions for disenfranchised communities. Understanding what licensing requirements are needed for various occupations and working with other states to maximize the portability of licensing can prevent residents of other states from retaking needed training when they move to Illinois.

A final opportunity to move job seekers more quickly into employment is to help them make informed decisions when selecting a training program. A recent report by the Deloitte Center for Governmental Insights[9] recommends that information about the suitability of training programs for individual needs and program outcomes be provided to consumers of training services. "Suitability" information includes locations of likely job placements, prerequisites for training entry, effort/education level required to complete the training, and delivery methods. Program outcome information includes graduation and placement rates, credential(s) earned, likely salary, and potential job growth in the field of training.

Examples
Heartland Community College and the District 5 high school in Normal, Illinois, partnered to create an information technology career pathway that enables students to graduate from high school with a diploma and an associate degree in information technology.

Community colleges and universities in Illinois can award credit for prior learning if individuals can demonstrate they have achieved the objectives for one or more specific courses. Specific statewide policies are in place to award academic credit for military training.

Illinois was selected to participate in the National Governors Association's State Collaborative Consortium to Understand and Support the On-Demand Workforce. Participation in this initiative will help Illinois identify ways to build the skills and knowledge that self-employed workers need to compete in the on-demand economy and develop socially responsible mechanisms for employers to leverage this talent.

Proposed Action Steps
a.   Use the insights and lessons learned from successful dual credit programs to scale up similar efforts in other sectors and regions.
b.   Determine the most effective marketing methods and messages for informing college and university students about PLAs.
c.   Investigate how targeted marketing can identify segments of the labor force, such as mature workers and the underemployed, who may not require extensive education or training to qualify for jobs in high demand occupations.

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[9] O'Leary, John, Scott Malm, Sushumna Agarwal (2018). *Reinventing Workforce Development: Making job training more effective*. Deloitte Center for Government Insights.

d. Research the licensing requirements for various in-demand occupations and work with other states to enhance the portability of licenses.
e. Request that the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board consider requiring eligible training providers publish information about training requirements, expectations, and outcomes.

Strategy: Use smart online tools to connect job-seekers to valuable information and programs that work

Illinois has many data tools available to decision-makers, researchers, and the public to help understand labor market trends, workforce needs and opportunities, and performance results of a variety of public programs. Because many of these data resources were developed at a time when State agencies had different reporting requirements and tracked different client characteristics, very few of these systems "talk" to each other today. This inability to connect or integrate data systems creates significant duplication and inefficiencies.

Additional opportunities to make better use of available data and online tools include:

1. Ensuring that these resources respond to the needs of current and potential end users.
2. Confirming that the evaluation research being conducted is providing useful results for priority research questions. For example, the effectiveness of workforce development programs has historically relied largely on outputs, rather than outcomes. Outputs include such measures as the number of job seekers served, credentials earned, employment gained, and wage levels. Unfortunately, little attention is paid to whether those outputs would have occurred even without the services provided or training support, or whether better outcomes could have been achieved with different approaches.
3. Minimize duplication and strengthen the integration and linkage of data resources and tools.

Examples

Illinois has launched a new centralized data portal for prospective Illinois college students that compiles information on graduation rates, costs, student debt and, for the first time, potential career earnings of graduates of the state's two- and four-year institutions. The Illinois College2Career website features information from more than 100 public and private colleges on subjects including basic tuition and financial aid, program offerings, and popular career paths for certain graduates.

Illinois is pursuing funding under the Data for the American Dream initiative to expand the Progressive Pathways project to provide an online front door to workforce development tools and resources. This project will improve career pathway decision-making by Illinois residents, particularly those who are low-income, underemployed, and unemployed. Also, by enhancing how data is collected and integrated, it will help inform continuous improvement of education and training in career pathways.

The *Illinois Longitudinal Data System* (ILDS) enables seven state agencies[10] to link early childhood, education, and workforce data over time to better understand program effectiveness and anticipate

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[10] Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Department of Human Services, Illinois State Board of Education, and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission.

future education and workforce needs. ILDS can deepen our understanding of the education and employment outcomes of Illinois learners and citizens. Examples include:

- How many Illinois children do the state's early childhood programs serve, and what is the impact of these programs on later learning?
- Are high school graduates prepared to succeed in community colleges and four-year universities?
- What are the employment outcomes for college graduates and completers of various workforce-training programs?

The *Economic Information and Analysis Division* (EI&A) of the Illinois Department of Employment Security has primary responsibility for the development and dissemination of workforce and labor market information in Illinois. Through broad public/non-public sector partnerships, EI&A has been generating workforce outcomes data on:

- growth industry sectors (construction, manufacturing, information technology and healthcare)
- 75,000 completers of training programs, including dislocated workers and youth
- 320,000 post-secondary graduates (2010-2014) in nearly 110 private and public two-year and four-year colleges
- Nearly two million high school seniors (2003-2016) representing all 852 Illinois public school districts
- More than 28,000 formerly incarcerated individuals

The *Illinois Employment Business System* (IEBS) is a new cloud-based software platform being developed by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. IEBS is an example of a smart and predictive tool that provides quality workforce information and layoff tracking data from multiple sources to help avert layoffs and promote economic and workforce development. This system is easy to access and understand, enabling users to quickly locate real time Dun & Bradstreet global business data, IDES labor market information, and State and local workforce layoff tracking data. IEBS may be accessed by smart phone, tablet, or laptop, providing current on-the-fly dashboards, analytic tools, and industry cluster information.

Proposed Action Steps

a. Expand access to information that helps job-seekers make better decisions about training programs. For example, the Illinois Department of Employment Security's College2Career portal currently only applies to two-and four-year institutions and, in partnership with Illinois education and employment agencies, could be expanded to other certificate programs. In addition, artificial intelligence and predictive analytics should be used in as many workforce tools as possible to provide individuals with the information and delivery methods that are most likely to be of use to them.
b. Develop Illinois Pro Path into an online front door providing a wide array of workforce development resources to job seekers and current workers.
c. Clarify and coordinate with researchers and decision-makers available education, workforce, and economic development resources so duplication is minimized, and strategic investment opportunities are identified.

d. Develop a statewide education and workforce research and evaluation agenda to establish research priorities, identify opportunities to integrate and leverage existing data assets, and communicate findings and progress to interested partners. Attention should be paid to understanding the impacts for disenfranchised populations.

e. Coordinate data collection from Illinois businesses. Creating Opportunities for Retention and Expansion (CORE) is a statewide coalition of economic development agencies, councils, and communities focused on business outreach, retention, and expansion. CORE partners conducted over 1,100 interviews between 2016-2018 on a variety of business and community factors, including workforce. As more occupational demand data is being requested from employers, it is essential that such efforts are coordinated to the maximum extent possible.

f. Move tools under development into testing and production. The Illinois Employment Business System (IEBS) described above is in the final stages of design and resources are needed to move it to the testing phase. A related opportunity is BizHub[11] which provides a centralized location for all employer-related content and increases the flow of information and coordination between employers and state assistance.

Strategy: Integrate workforce services for job seekers

Individuals with multiple barriers to employment may access workforce-related services through various public programs administered by different agencies. Ensuring that these programs are working together to provide seamless and coordinated services will facilitate the transition from aspiring worker to employee. This need to better integrate workforce services has been reflected over the past 20 years in federal workforce legislation that has increasingly emphasized customer focus. The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 reformed federally funded job training programs by creating a new, comprehensive workforce investment system intended to help U.S. companies find skilled workers and assist job seekers and current workers in accessing the information and quality services they need to manage their careers. In 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act further strengthened the focus on customers by requiring that employment and training services provided by the core agency partners be coordinated and integrated.

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), charged with providing leadership for Illinois' workforce system, has recognized service integration as a major driver of quality service. Ensuring that employer and job-seeking customers have prompt access to the array of services they need improves the quality and timeliness of matching workers with employers.

Example

The IWIB adopted a service integration policy in 2018 that is being implemented in all Illinois workforce areas. This policy provides a detailed description of how service integration strengthens the operation and effectiveness of the State's network of one-stop centers. A self-assessment guide has been developed that lays out a process for one-stop centers to use in collaborating with partners to agree on a baseline of service integration for seven one-stop functions. This self-assessment will be administered annually to determine progress and identify improvement targets.

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[11] https://www.illinoisworknet.com/bizhub/Pages/default.aspx

Proposed Action Steps

a. Fast track the implementation of the IWIB's new workforce service integration policy aimed at improving how job seeker and employer customers of workforce programs connect with available services, resulting in better and faster customer outcomes and more efficient utilization of public resources.

b. Provide training and technical assistance to the state network of One-Stop Centers to help them implement this policy.

c. Provide the IWIB with progress reports on policy implementation to identify needed course corrections and additional resources.

Strategy: Give employers easy access to the skilled workforce they need

Over the last few decades, less urbanized areas of states across the Midwest have seen a slow and steady depopulation as jobs have disappeared. The four regions of Illinois with the lowest population density are the Northwest, West Central, South, and Southeast. From 1990 to 2017, these regions lost more than 3% of their population at a time when the overall state population grew by more than 12%. Equally concerning is the aging of the population that remains in these less urbanized regions. These four regions rank highest for share of their population age 65 or older and rank among the lowest for share of their population below age 19. Finally, the percent of residents in these regions who are college graduates is well below the percent statewide and the other six regions of Illinois, indicating a "brain-drain" of the most educated members of these communities. Appendix B shows population characteristics for each of the State's 10 Economic Development Regions.

Increasing employer awareness of available workforce development resources will be key to retaining existing jobs and attracting new business and industry. An array of tax credits and incentives are available to employers who hire and retain individuals in specific groups, and additional information about employer resources is available through the network of one-stop centers located throughout Illinois or through Illinois workNet[12] (IwN). IwN is the State's workforce development portal and provides access to workforce development resources aimed at individuals, employers, and workforce/education partners.

Examples

The federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is available to employers who hire and retain veterans, mature workers, people with disabilities, formerly incarcerated individuals, veterans, and youth. Employers claim about $1 billion in tax credits each year under the WOTC program, and there is no limit on the number of individuals an employer can hire to qualify for this tax credit.

The Employer Training Investment Program (ETIP) supports Illinois workers' efforts to upgrade their skills so they can remain current in new technologies and business practices. Employers must match training funds received from the ETIP program.

Proposed Action Steps

a. For companies relocating or expanding in Illinois, provide free comprehensive and customized training and recruitment services. Create a one-stop shop that works closely with companies

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[12] https://www.illinoisworknet.com/Jobs/Pages/HiringCredits.aspx

relocating to or expanding in Illinois to assess their need for workforce solutions, develop and provide customized training programs, and assist in employee recruitment and screening. This program would be modeled after Louisiana's FastStart and Georgia's QuickStart program, which are widely recognized as a best practice in the field of workforce development.

b. Prioritize the development of talent pipeline projects (discussed above) in the Northwest, West Central, Southern and Southeast regions of the state. These regions have more small and medium-sized employers who stand to benefit from such efforts. Given the more rural nature of these regions, it is incumbent upon public sector partners to convene the business leadership needed for these projects. Technology may be an indispensable resource in doing this.

c. Prioritize workforce development within efforts to improve infrastructure and quality of life in rural areas. For instance, efforts to provide high-speed internet coverage to all areas of the state should ensure that that coverage is adequate to the needs of businesses in rural regions. For example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recently announced the launch of a new program to create high-speed internet connectivity in rural America. The Governor's Rural Advisory Council can play an important leadership role to ensure that the workforce development needs of rural Illinois are understood and addressed.

Suggested Legislative and Policy Actions

The following items are suggested in the preceding sections of this report as important in framing a new workforce agenda for Illinois. This does not include many actions listed above that may be accomplished through programmatic changes or that do not require legislative or policy action.

Legislative actions
*   Expand funding for effective programs such as the Employer Training Investment Program, Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing, dual credit programs, and Integrated Education and Training models
*   Provide business tax credits for hiring apprentices
*   Enhance the portability of professional licenses across state lines, in collaboration with other states
*   Present DCEO's Five-Year Economic Development Plan to the General Assembly by July 1, 2019

Policy actions
*   Ensure all agencies use a unified approach to identifying target industries and occupations
*   Identify targeted industry sectors in each region while preparing the DCEO's Five-Year Economic Development Plan, and use these during the WIOA regional planning process
*   Incorporate information about projected growth in target industry sectors into the process of identifying in-demand occupations at both the state and regional levels
*   Require outcome metrics to be disaggregated by race, gender, and target population characteristics
*   Compel advisory and oversight boards/councils to set equity goals and prepare action plans to achieve them.
*   Evaluate Illinois' new apprenticeship intermediaries and navigators to ensure they maintain best practices and get results

- Coordinate the role of the State's major data resources in education, workforce and economic development
- Establish research priorities and a statewide research agenda
- Require eligible training providers to publish information about training program requirements, expectations and outcomes
- Fast track the implementation of the IWIB's new workforce service integration policy
- Develop a rural workforce and economic development agenda for rural Illinois
- Include workforce development programming within efforts to improve infrastructure and quality of life in rural areas

Conclusion

After years of turnover and uncertainty, Illinois' new leadership has the opportunity to refocus and redouble our efforts in economic and workforce development. It is time to embrace change that provides all Illinoisans access to a stable and prosperous future. We must address the immediate need of employers of all sizes and in all parts of the State for skilled workers who will boost productivity and competitiveness; and of residents for careers that will support families and sustain and grow our communities. We must redouble our collaborative efforts across education and workforce agencies to integrate and align services and scale up effective practices. Our shared goal is that every employer will have access to the skilled workers they need to remain and grow in Illinois, and every Illinoisan who wants to work will have the opportunity and support to succeed in a career.

Appendix A

Disenfranchised Individuals

For purposes of this report, disenfranchised individuals are those who have been systematically excluded from economic opportunity because of their birth, geography, or life circumstances. Characteristics often associated with disenfranchisement are referenced as necessary for eligibility in receiving federal and/or state assistance. These include, but are not limited to, individuals who are:

- Low-Income
- Low-skilled, including those without a high school diploma
- Physically, mentally, or developmentally disabled
- Returning citizens (ex-offenders)
- English language learners or those facing substantial cultural barriers
- Migrant and seasonal farmworkers
- Out-of-school youth
- Long-term unemployed
- Mature workers
- Homeless
- Teen parents (including single pregnant women)
- Youth in the foster system or who have aged out
- Displaced homemakers

Appendix B

Characteristics of Illinois Economic Development Regions

(A map of the 10 regions is provided at the end of this appendix)

Table B1: Economic Development Region Population Estimates 1990 - 2017

	Central	East Central	North Central	Northeast	Northern Stateline	Northwest	South	Southeast	Southwest	West Central	State
1990 Census Population	543,335	321,892	597,898	7,507,113	377,728	498,707	385,253	302,432	658,856	237,288	11,430,502
2000 Census Population	555,871	325,528	628,096	8,376,601	420,215	506,127	389,777	309,857	671,603	235,618	12,419,293
2010 Census Population	554,705	343,234	656,004	8,700,058	450,639	501,968	385,373	306,873	704,091	227,687	12,830,632
2013 Population Estimate	550,217	345,245	660,522	8,787,583	443,637	495,839	382,005	302,959	697,632	224,764	12,890,403
2015 Population Estimate	544,028	345,949	652,453	8,797,166	437,993	490,111	378,463	300,779	692,653	222,456	12,862,051
2017 Population Estimate	537,279	344,909	646,002	8,772,503	434,408	485,427	374,340	298,113	689,793	219,249	12,802,023

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/)

Table B2: Economic Development Region Population (Percent of State)

	Central	East Central	North Central	Northeast	Northern Stateline	Northwest	South	Southeast	Southwest	West Central	State
1990 Census Population	4.75%	2.82%	5.23%	65.68%	3.30%	4.36%	3.37%	2.65%	5.76%	2.08%	100%
2000 Census Population	4.48%	2.62%	5.06%	67.45%	3.38%	4.08%	3.14%	2.49%	5.41%	1.90%	100%
2010 Census Population	4.32%	2.68%	5.11%	67.81%	3.51%	3.91%	3.00%	2.39%	5.49%	1.77%	100%
2013 Population Estimate	4.27%	2.68%	5.12%	68.17%	3.44%	3.85%	2.96%	2.35%	5.41%	1.74%	100%
2015 Population Estimate	4.23%	2.69%	5.07%	68.40%	3.41%	3.81%	2.94%	2.34%	5.39%	1.73%	100%
2017 Population Estimate	4.20%	2.69%	5.05%	68.52%	3.39%	3.79%	2.92%	2.33%	5.39%	1.71%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/)

Table B3: Economic Development Region Population by Age Group

	Central	East Central	North Central	Northeast	Northern Stateline	Northwest	South	Southeast	Southwest	West Central	State
Percent Persons under 5 years,	5.6%	5.8%	**6.2%**	**6.2%**	6.0%	5.7%	5.7%	5.8%	5.9%	5.4%	6.1%
Percent Persons 5-19 years,	18.7%	**19.8%**	19.6%	**19.8%**	20.0%	18.5%	17.9%	18.6%	19.0%	18.5%	19.6%
Percent Persons 20-64 years,	58.0%	60.0%	58.6%	**60.7%**	57.4%	56.8%	58.0%	57.9%	59.5%	57.0%	60.0%
Percent Persons 65+ years,	**17.7%**	14.4%	**15.6%**	13.2%	**16.6%**	**19.0%**	**18.3%**	**17.8%**	**15.7%**	**19.1%**	14.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2013-2107 5-year estimates (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/)
Bolded figures are greater than the statewide average

Table B4: Economic Development Region Population by Educational Attainment

	Central	East Central	North Central	Northeast	Northern Stateline	Northwest	South	Southeast	Southwest	West Central	State
Non-High school graduate (% of persons age 25+)	9.3%	7.7%	7.8%	**12.2%**	**12.0%**	10.5%	**12.0%**	**11.9%**	8.9%	10.0%	11%
High school graduate, no bachelors (% of persons age 25+)	**66.1%**	**60.4%**	**62.0%**	50.0%	**66.4%**	**69.4%**	**68.6%**	**69.6%**	**66.1%**	**68.5%**	55%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher (% of persons age 25+)	24.6%	31.9%	30.2%	**37.8%**	21.6%	20.0%	19.4%	18.4%	25.1%	21.6%	33%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2013-2107 5-year estimates (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/)
Bolded figures are greater than the statewide average

Table B5: Economic Development Region Population by Assistance and Poverty

	Central	East Central	North Central	Northeast	Northern Stateline	Northwest	South	Southeast	Southwest	West Central	State
Percent of Households Receiving cash public assistance or Food Stamps/SNAP within past 12 months	**14.6%**	11.9%	12.4%	13.6%	**17.7%**	12.8%	**18.6%**	**15.8%**	13.7%	**14.5%**	14%
Percent Persons below poverty level	**14.8%**	**19.5%**	13.0%	12.9%	**14.3%**	12.8%	**18.7%**	**15.5%**	14.0%	**15.7%**	14%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2013-2107 5-year estimates (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/)
Bolded figures are greater than the statewide average

Table B6: Economic Development Region Population by Veteran Status

	Central	East Central	North Central	Northeast	Northern Stateline	Northwest	South	Southeast	Southwest	West Central	State
Veterans (% of persons age 18+)	**9.5%**	**7.1%**	**8.0%**	4.9%	**8.6%**	**9.2%**	**9.5%**	**8.5%**	**11.2%**	**8.9%**	6.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2013-2107 5-year estimates (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/)
Bolded figures are greater than the statewide average

Table B7: Economic Development Region Population by Disability Status

	Central	East Central	North Central	Northeast	Northern Stateline	Northwest	South	Southeast	Southwest	West Central	State
Persons with a disability (% of 18-64 non-institutionalized population)	**11.8%**	8.7%	9.0%	7.5%	**11.6%**	**10.7%**	**15.3%**	**13.3%**	**10.8%**	**11.3%**	9%
Labor Force Participation Rate of Persons with a disability	41.8%	42.6%	42.3%	**44.3%**	42.6%	43.0%	36.2%	42.6%	40.7%	39.3%	43%
Unemployment Rate of persons with a disability	**17.1%**	15.7%	14.9%	**16.3%**	**23.3%**	14.4%	**16.8%**	11.0%	12.7%	14.5%	16%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2013-2107 5-year estimates (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/)
Bolded figures are greater than the statewide average

Table B8: Economic Development Region Population by Language Other Than English Spoken at Home

	Central	East Central	North Central	Northeast	Northern Stateline	Northwest	South	Southeast	Southwest	West Central	State
Language Other Than English Spoken at Home (% of persons age 5+)	3.8%	12.2%	6.1%	**30.5%**	12.7%	8.1%	3.9%	4.3%	3.9%	3.8%	23%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2013-2107 5-year estimates (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/)
Bolded figures are greater than the statewide average

Table B9: Economic Development Region Population by Gender

	Central	East Central	North Central	Northeast	Northern Stateline	Northwest	South	Southeast	Southwest	West Central	State
Percent Male	48.9%	49.7%	49.2%	48.9%	49.0%	49.9%	50.3%	50.0%	49.2%	50.1%	49%
Percent Female	51.1%	50.3%	50.8%	51.1%	51.0%	50.1%	49.7%	50.0%	50.8%	49.9%	51%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2013-2107 5-year estimates (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/)

Table B10: Economic Development Region Population by Race

	Central	East Central	North Central	Northeast	Northern Stateline	Northwest	South	Southeast	Southwest	West Central	State
White alone	86.6%	78.6%	85.8%	65.4%	82.5%	90.2%	89.5%	94.9%	80.3%	91.1%	72%
Black or African American alone	8.8%	11.3%	7.9%	16.8%	9.7%	4.4%	6.6%	2.5%	15.6%	5.2%	14%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0%
Asian alone	1.1%	6.5%	2.8%	6.8%	1.9%	1.2%	1.1%	0.6%	1.0%	1.1%	5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0%
Some other race alone	0.5%	1.1%	0.9%	8.2%	2.8%	1.8%	0.5%	0.4%	0.7%	0.8%	6%
Two or more races	2.7%	2.3%	2.4%	2.5%	2.8%	2.1%	2.1%	1.4%	2.2%	1.5%	2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2013-2107 5-year estimates (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/)

Table B11: Economic Development Region Individuals Receiving SNAP or TANF Assistance

	Central	East Central	North Central	Northeast	Northern Stateline	Northwest	South	Southeast	Southwest	West Central	State
SNAP - Total Individuals	93,654	51,862	91,411	1,113,724	81,496	51,249	48,012	73,546	101,689	50,238	1,756,881
TANF - Total Individuals	4,634	1,681	3,978	32,944	2,746	1,529	1,624	2,140	4,844	1,366	57,486

Source: Illinois Department of Human Services, January 2019

Table B12: Economic Development Region Individuals Receiving Vocational Rehab Assistance

	Central	East Central	North Central	Northeast	Northern Stateline	Northwest	South	Southeast	Southwest	West Central	State
Individuals, under Age 25 with Disabilities, who are Receiving Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Services	1,365	464	1,317	11,997	421	832	503	1,156	850	732	19,637
Individuals, Age 25+ with Disabilities, who are Receiving Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Services	639	414	450	4,530	247	284	284	486	430	319	8,083
Total Individuals with Disabilities who are Receiving Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Services	2,004	878	1,767	16,527	668	1,116	787	1,642	1,280	1,051	27,720

Source: Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Services, February 2019

Table B13: Economic Development Region Annual Average Unemployment Rates

	Central	East Central	North Central	Northeast	Northern Stateline	Northwest	South	Southeast	Southwest	West Central	State
1990	5.0	4.6	4.5	**6.3**	5.4	5.7	**7.6**	**9.2**	**6.6**	5.3	6.1
2000	4.1	3.8	3.8	**4.4**	4.3	**4.5**	**4.7**	**5.4**	4.2	4.1	4.3
2010	9.2	9.1	9.3	**10.6**	**13.5**	10.3	9.8	10.0	9.6	8.6	10.4
2013	8.8	8.1	8.4	**9.1**	**10.3**	8.8	8.7	**9.5**	8.9	7.8	9.0
2015	5.9	5.6	6.0	5.9	**6.8**	**6.3**	6.0	**6.7**	6.0	5.5	6.0
2017	4.7	4.6	5.0	5.0	**6.0**	5.0	4.7	**5.5**	4.5	4.4	5.0

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)
Bolded figures are greater than the statewide average

Table B14: Economic Development Region Labor Force Participation Rates

	Central	East Central	North Central	Northeast	Northern Stateline	Northwest	South	Southeast	Southwest	West Central	State
Percent in the Labor Force (% of persons age 16+)	61.2%	61.5%	63.5%	**67.2%**	64.6%	61.9%	54.9%	60.3%	62.5%	58.5%	65.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2013-2107 5-year estimates (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/)
Bolded figures are greater than the statewide average

Central

East Central

North Central

Northeast

Northern Stateline

Northwest

Southeast

Southern

Southwest

West Central
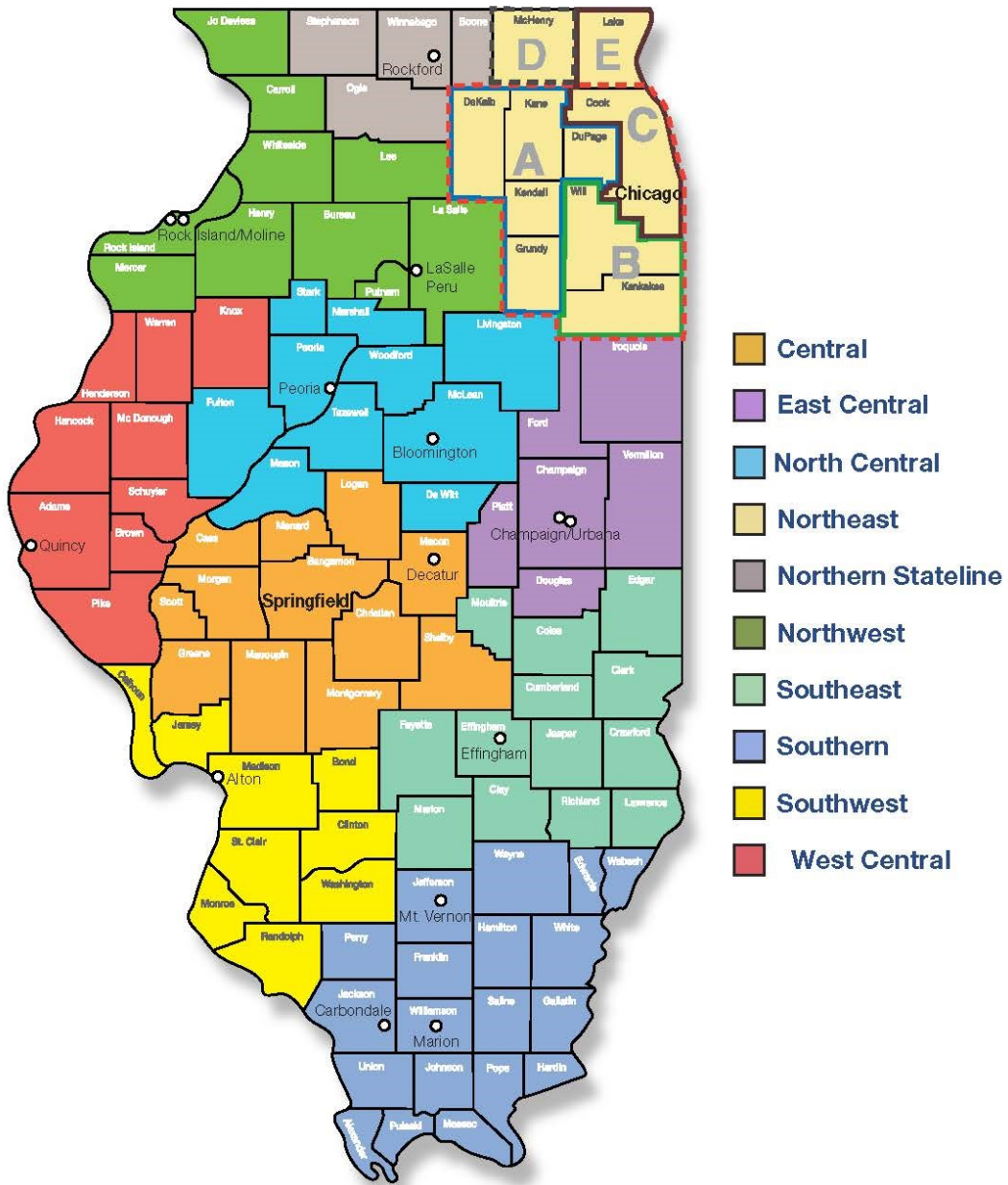
Appendix C

Summary of Programs with Expansion Potential

Throughout this report, we recommend that the State expand current programs or use them as a model for novel approaches or policies. These programs and initiatives have been identified as effective by economic and workforce development partners, business and labor leaders, and a review of successful programs in Illinois and around the nation. We summarize successful Illinois programs cited in this report and their outcomes below.

Program	Purpose	Outcomes/Potential
Chicago Apprenticeship Network	Major employers teamed up with community colleges and non-profits to design apprenticeship programs in information technology, insurance, and human resources.	Today this employer-led apprenticeship network has grown to include more than 20 companies all working to design their own apprenticeship programs. The Network's goal is 1,000 apprentices by 2020. There is interest by workforce agencies, community colleges, and corporations across the state to emulate this model.
Rockford Area Aerospace Network (RAAN)	Brings together the Northern Stateline region's Tier 1 aerospace companies, many of their regional suppliers, regional economic development organizations, and education and training providers at all levels.	The RAAN has worked with major stakeholders in the aerospace industry in the Rockford region to develop a comprehensive economic development strategy, a five-year strategic plan, and a set of resources for industry members. By three years into the plan, they generated $880 million in capital investment and over 5,000 new or retained jobs in the region.
Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing (ATIM)	Manufacturers, education entities, and workforce partners collaborated to identify skill needs and reduced the time from training to employment	Participants experienced Increased certification rates, employment rate 10% higher than non-participants, and earnings about 20% higher than non-participants Evaluation suggests potentially even better outcomes with greater business outreach
Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Program	A multi-agency partnership to reduce the rate of recidivism by providing life skills, career readiness, and occupational training to inmates prior to release	Since 2017, 233 inmates have participated in skills training, cognitive behavior therapy, GED and technical courses, work experience, and job search 16 inmates earned a welding certificate from Black Hawk Community College and are employed at Midwest Trailer or in their home communities
St. Clair County-SIU Head Start/Early Head Start Early Childhood Development Career Pathways	Parents using Head Start services are recruited to an apprenticeship program in early childhood development	Graduates have a job and a credential and are encouraged to continue their education to obtain an associate's degree Program is scalable for any county or region with a Head Start program
Connecting Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients with career preparation and training	Help 164,000 SNAP recipients keep their benefits while receiving skills training	Use strategies learned through the EPIC pilot to provide basic and technical skill training and work experience that lead to good jobs, increased earnings, and reduced reliance on public assistance.

Program	Purpose	Outcomes/Potential
Illinois DHS Rehabilitation Services' partnership with UIUC's E3 (Educate, Empower and Employ) project	Help young adults with disabilities who have been arrested, spent time in jail or prison, or aging out of foster care prepare for employment	E3 has helped provide services to 164 individuals who are in foster care or recently aged out, 78 ex-offenders under 25 year of age, and 374 ex-offenders who are 25 or older
Integrated Education and Training models	Increase high school completion, basic skills and English language skills acquisition while earning industry-recognized credentials that lead to in-demand occupations	Jane Addams Resource Center (JARC) contextualizes math and reading with CNC training to set low-skill individuals on a career pathway in manufacturing JARC graduates 91% of their trainees, and 93% find full-time employment. Trainees move from an average annual salary of $9,675 at entry to nearly $33,000 in their first year of employment.
Dual credit programs across the state	Offer high school students the opportunity to earn high school and college credits simultaneously	Successful programs include the partnership between Heartland Community College and the District 5 high school in Normal, Illinois, to create an information technology career pathway that enables students to graduate from high school with a diploma and an associate's degree in IT
Illinois Science and Technology Institute's Mentor Matching Engine	Provide young women and minority high school students with high quality STEM mentoring regardless of geography	Create safe opportunities for young people to explore careers in science, technology, engineering, and math
Pathways to Results (PTR)	Program available to all community colleges to continuously enhance pathways and programs of study by addressing inequities in student outcomes	Prairie State College used resources available through PTR to improve access to their dental assistant program to in-district students, which were predominantly African-American. PTR helped Rend Lake College adopt strategies to increase degree completion among part-time and non-traditional by age students.
Creating Opportunities for Retention and Expansion (CORE) Coalition	Conduct business interviews to collect information on a variety of business and community factors	Over 1,100 interviews conducted from 2016-18, 92% of which were with small employers