



# STRIKING THE BALANCE

Addressing the Needs of Illinois' Employers and  
Most Vulnerable Jobseekers

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**YOUNG**   
**INVINCIBLES**



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# INTRODUCTION

Illinois' employers need a robust, educated labor force to remain competitive. However, a half-century-long trend in population loss<sup>1</sup> as well as a skill and interest mismatch between the remaining workforce and in-demand occupations have left some of the state's businesses struggling to find the talent that meets their needs.<sup>2</sup> Current low unemployment rates for the general population—generally a sign of a healthy economy—further complicate employers' efforts to secure skilled workers from an already small labor pool.<sup>3</sup>

The changing economic landscape not only affects companies, it impacts job seekers as well. Illinois' workers face declining job opportunities and other threats to economic stability.<sup>4</sup> This is particularly true for women, people of color, and young people between the ages of 16 and 24. In 2018, African-American unemployment in Illinois was the highest in the nation,<sup>5</sup> the state had the second highest youth unemployment rate,<sup>6</sup> and Illinois ranked No. 31 in the nation for the high wage gap between men and women.<sup>7</sup>

Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker recognized the need for a labor market overhaul to address both employers' and laborers' needs. As one of his first acts in office, Governor Pritzker signed Executive Order 2019-3. The order called for the state's Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) to identify industries primed for growth, review current and best practices for investing in these industries, and identify how to improve "alignment of workforce resources for communities that have been disenfranchised, including rural and urban communities."<sup>8</sup> Among other insights, the Executive Order report's authors found that apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs are a promising solution to Illinois' seemingly paradoxical job market: high unemployment rates among vulnerable job seekers but persistent job vacancies in in-demand fields.

Investing in apprenticeship and the other solutions outlined in the Executive Order report will require leveraging both new and existing resources. Currently, the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) serves as the primary source of funding for initiatives dedicated to connecting marginalized communities to meaningful employment. As a component of the legislation, each state must develop a Unified State Plan which describes a comprehensive strategy that coordinates efforts across education, economic, and workforce agencies.<sup>9</sup> WIOA mandates that states submit an updated Unified State Plan in 2020, which provides a valuable opportunity to advance the report findings for Executive Order 2019-3 and coordinate action that supports both employers and the talent pipelines' needs.

The Integrated Business Services Team (IBST), which convenes representatives from Workforce System (WFS) agencies (including DCEO, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Department of Employment Security, and the Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services) and is charged with executing WIOA policy and streamlining



services for employers across workforce and education providers, is well positioned to implement recommendations in the Unified State Plan. To make the Unified State Plan responsive to the needs of Illinois' employers and the workforce, particularly those with barriers to employment, the IBST sought information on how to leverage Work-Based Learning (WBL)<sup>i</sup> to assist both employers and the talent-pipeline. IBST and others at the state and federal levels have identified WBL as a promising strategy for connecting employers to labor pools because it “provides participants with work-based opportunities to practice and enhance the skills and knowledge gained in their program of study or industry training program, as well as to develop employability, and includes an assessment and recognition of acquired knowledge and skills.”<sup>10</sup>

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## WORKFORCE SYSTEM (WFS) PARTNERS

The workforce system includes multiple groups with whom employers could partner to meet their talent needs. For the sake of this report, the following groups comprise the Workforce System.

- K-12 schools
- Community colleges
- 4-year colleges and universities
- Illinois workNet Centers/One Stop Centers [including Illinois Department of Employment Security and the Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services]
- Other training providers [including workforce development organizations like Jane Addams Resource Corporation]

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To conduct this research, IBST members partnered with Young Invincibles (YI). YI is a national nonprofit organization that advances economic opportunity for young adults 18-34 years old through policy, research, and consumer education. YI's Midwest regional office in Illinois has conducted research on apprenticeships due to the strategy's demonstrated efficacy in helping young adults secure living-wage occupations while meeting employers' staffing needs.<sup>11</sup> YI and IBST's shared goal of expanding economic opportunity for all is the foundation of this report. We examined how state agencies can encourage greater use of the state's workforce system generally and WBL programs like apprenticeships specifically; additionally, the research identified employers' willingness to hire from disadvantaged communities.

Although WBL is useful in all industries, this research focuses on the manufacturing and health care sectors. The IBST selected these sectors because of their growing number of job vacancies, their ability to create living-wage career pathways, and their representation in rural,

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i The State of Illinois defined elements of Work-Based Learning (WBL) in its Career Pathways Dictionary. The five work-based learning experiences examined in this report follow the Career Pathways Dictionary's definitions of Career Exploration, Team-Based Challenges, Career Development Experience, Registered Apprenticeship, and Non-Registered Apprenticeship. For more information, visit <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL-Career-Pathways-Dictionary.PDF>.



suburban, and urban communities throughout Illinois. Additionally, their disparate history using WBL—the manufacturing field has significant history using WBL, particularly apprenticeships, to develop talent while health care is relatively new to apprenticeships—illuminate the needs of industries with varying degrees of exposure to apprenticeships and other WBL strategies.

YI and the IBST collected qualitative and quantitative data to inform this report. In partnership with the Technology Manufacturers Association and the Society of Human Resources Managers, IBST and YI facilitated two listening sessions with more than 60 Illinois employers from the manufacturing and health care sectors. The listening sessions targeted employers of varying sizes and were held in Springfield and Schaumburg to ensure diverse regions' experiences were represented. In addition to the listening sessions, local workforce boards and other partners collected 212 survey responses from companies in various sectors and regions throughout the state; of those surveys where a sector was indicated, manufacturing, health care, and transportation, distribution and logistics were the most represented industries. Key findings from the survey are highlighted in this report; for all results, see Appendices B-D.

The survey assessed employers' interest in partnering with the WFS; the barriers that prevent additional partnership; businesses' awareness, interest, and use of WBL programs; and companies' willingness to work with populations with employment barriers.

The focus groups and surveys revealed that there is an opportunity for the state to increase employers' engagement with the WFS while helping connect vulnerable populations to meaningful employment. However, serving the needs of both companies and communities is only possible if the state meets three demands that employers expressed in this research: 1) improved candidate quality emerging from the WFS, 2) one point of contact in the WFS and 3) support with using WBL strategies. By addressing these concerns, state agencies can encourage employers to hire WIOA-eligible populations.

YI used this thesis to develop recommendations that address employers' expectations of the WFS. We then facilitated an interactive webinar with more than ten Illinois-based employers and Chambers of Commerce to test the proposals. They affirmed most employers are unaware of the WFS' services, consider the system difficult to navigate, and support the idea of a credential to confirm candidates hold essential employability skills, but the credential must be maintained by a trusted party. Based on their feedback, we adjusted our recommendations as needed to reflect the nuances of both the WFS and employers' operations.

This report expands on how to maximize the WFS' dual purpose of serving Illinois' employers and talent. The first section of this report provides context on the challenges facing Illinois' employers, workers, and communities and the challenges state agencies face when meeting the needs of these varying groups. Because of the WFS' charge to help both the supply and demand side of the labor market, it often struggles to coordinate services. The complex matrix of services can deter employers from using the system, which in turn, negatively impacts the state's ability to meet the employment needs of those populations left out of the economic



recovery.

The second section is an analysis of results from both the listening sessions and surveys and highlights the implications for Illinois' education, economic development, and workforce agencies. The results indicate that employers have a general willingness to fill labor shortages with WIOA-eligible populations (namely out-of-school-and-work youth, veterans, people with disabilities, returning citizens from the criminal justice system, long-term unemployed, and English-Language Learners), but they insist that all candidates from the WFS must meet technical and soft skill expectations<sup>ii</sup>. The employers also indicated a willingness to invest in WBL programs so that they can cultivate talent with the skills they need; however employers need support to help launch these programs and retain populations with barriers.

The final section of the report provides recommendations on the steps necessary to create a robust talent pipeline—not only in the targeted sectors but for Illinois as a whole. Recommendations build on examples from other states and highlight promising strategies that Illinois' employers, municipalities, and education systems can use to improve services. Key suggestions include identifying a single point of contact for employers seeking support; improving candidate quality and retention through employability credentialing and WBL; creating a resource map of providers to clarify the system to employers and WFS staff; and marketing the WFS after single points of contact are identified.

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ii This report focuses on employers' interest in WIOA-eligible populations because WIOA is the primary funding stream that the Illinois WFS system uses to serve its talent customers



# ILLINOIS' ECONOMIC CONTEXT: THE NEEDS OF ALL COMMUNITIES

By some indicators, Illinois' economy is relatively healthy. The state's college attainment rates and household income are above national averages, while the proportion of individuals living below the poverty line is slightly lower than the nation's mean.<sup>12</sup> In 2018, Illinois saw an overall gain of 70,000 jobs, with particularly strong growth in high- and mid-wage jobs.<sup>13</sup> In fact, during the fall of 2018, Illinois' celebrated its lowest unemployment rate in more than forty years.<sup>14</sup>

Although these milestones are cause for celebration, Illinois' employment rates still lag behind its Midwestern neighbors and the nation overall. The state is tied with Louisiana for the seventh highest unemployment rate, and disaggregating the data provides an even bleaker picture. The state's youth (ages 16-24) experience jobless rates at nearly double the nation's average.<sup>15</sup> People of color in particular often are left out of job gains; as of 2018, Illinois had the highest African American unemployment rate in the country.<sup>16</sup>

Despite the number of job seekers struggling to find work, several sectors report difficulty attracting and retaining talent, according to national data. From hospitality workers to teachers to cybersecurity analysts, occupations across the skill spectrum remain vacant.<sup>17</sup> Key sectors in Illinois are no exception. Manufacturing companies, which account for 10% of jobs in the state,<sup>18</sup> report persistent labor shortages and construction and building trade associations cite similar struggles. Of the 60 building trades contractors that responded to a recent survey, 68% reported trouble finding skilled labor.<sup>19</sup> In the health care sector, Illinois will have a 21,000-nurse shortfall by 2020.<sup>20</sup> Rural areas in particular are struggling to attract health care professionals.<sup>21</sup>

The public sector can play a vital role in addressing the seeming paradox between high unemployment with some populations and labor shortages. Multiple state agencies work to either train the workforce, support businesses, or both, but coordinating services across the WFS is challenging. The IBST has mapped the numerous parties, overlapping functions, and disparate performance metrics of the WFS partners, which creates confusion among WFS partners and reduces efficacy in serving its employer and talent customers.<sup>22</sup> Building on the work and previous research, the following section identifies employers' primary needs when interacting with the WFS to inform what additional improvements are needed to more effectively meet their talent demands. YI found that in meeting employers' needs, the WFS can also address the Governor's call for more viable career pathway opportunities for marginalized populations. The feedback below informs the recommendations shared at the end of this report.



# FINDINGS & IMPLICATIONS OF EMPLOYER FEEDBACK

Four themes emerged from the surveys, listening sessions, and the webinar. First, employers are willing to partner with one another and state agencies to improve their recruitment and retention results. Second, to increase employers use of workforce and education agencies' services, the system must become further simplified and employers must receive higher quality candidates from the WFS. Third, employers displayed a tepid willingness to hire from WIOA-eligible populations. Lastly, employers are interested in WBL programs as a talent development strategy but need a deeper understanding of WBL programs' benefits and how best to implement them. By improving employer-facing services and addressing questions employers hold on what it means to work with WIOA-eligible populations, education, workforce, and economic development agencies can grow the state's economy and reverse persistent high unemployment rates with disenfranchised populations. As the first finding indicates, state agencies can begin to enhance services by building on employers' willingness to partner with the WFS and other businesses.

## Finding One: Leverage Broad Interest in Partnerships

Survey results found that 64% of employers either currently partner or would like to partner with similar companies to address shared challenges. Research bears out that “co-opetition,” defined as the strategy of cooperation with competitors, is a fruitful approach for businesses in the same industry or region.<sup>23</sup> In tight labor markets and in industries with high training costs, co-opetition helps businesses share both risks and benefits associated with recruiting and training talent. The method also acknowledges that younger generations desire greater mobility and will likely move among similar employers during their careers.<sup>24</sup> By developing a cooperative approach to talent development, businesses can fill their talent needs, mitigate risks and costs, and more nimbly respond to an increasingly transient workforce.

Given the benefits of partnerships and the demonstrated willingness of Illinois' employers to partner together, the WFS should seek additional strategies for supporting coordinated talent development actions. One such initiative, the Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) strategy encourages the WFS to create opportunities for businesses in the same industry to convene and identify common challenges and solutions to their labor needs.<sup>25</sup> The state already requires its Apprenticeship Navigator grantees to use TPM in their role as regional apprenticeship consultants; if the state implements a statewide navigator system across all regions, Illinois employers will benefit from a proven strategy that leverages employers' demonstrated appetite for partnership.





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## KEY PARTNERSHIPS

In the survey, employers identified organizations with whom they formally or informally partner. Below is a list of frequently cited partners:

**Formal Relationships:** Illinois Business Innovation Services, Technology Manufacturers Association, Industry Consortium for Advanced Technical Training, Golden Corridor Advance Manufacturing Partnership (GCAMP), Inspire Your Future, Manufacturing Day, NIS, Manufacturing Connect, Proviso Leyden Council for Community Action Inc., Addison Workforce Board, Manufacturing Advisory Group, CIHRA, Society for Human Resources Management, Lincoln Land Community College/Center City Technical Center, Midwest Technical Institute, four-year colleges/universities (unnamed)

**Informal Relationships:** Precision Machined Products Association, other local companies (SWD, Inc.), Jane Addams Resource Corporation, local hospitals

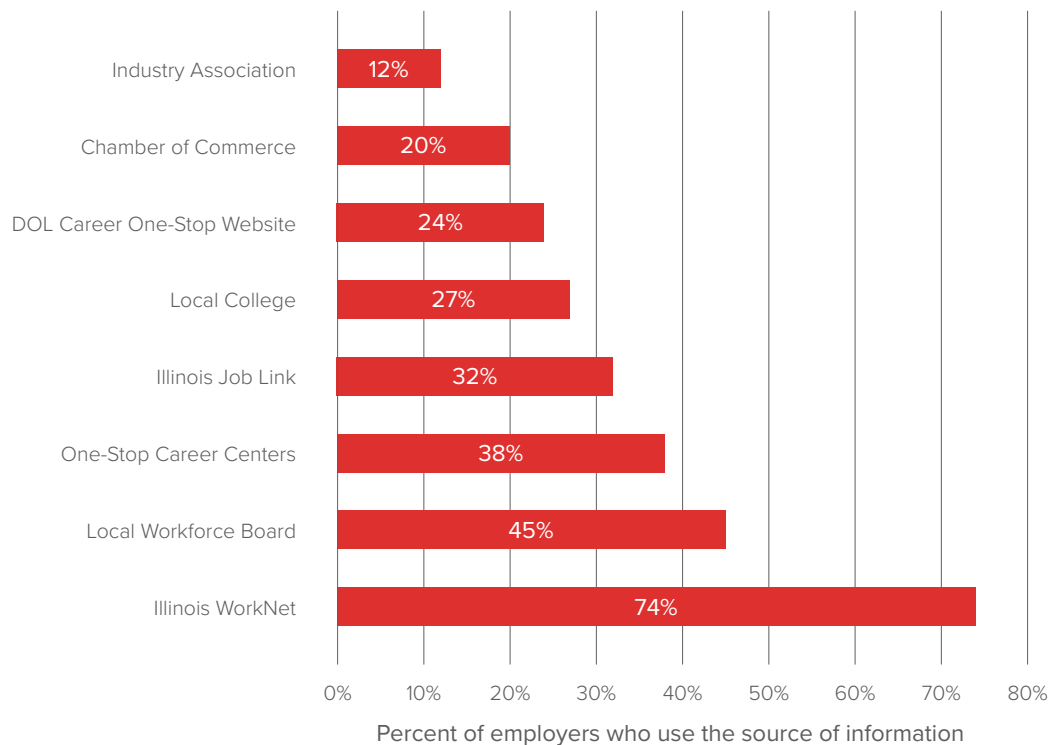
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In addition to a demonstrated inclination towards partnership with other businesses, employers are also interested in partnering with the public WFS. In the survey, employers cited community colleges most often as a partner. Four-year institutions were cited second-most, while the Illinois workNet Centers were virtually tied with K-12 schools as the third option for training needs. YI also found that employers already familiar with the WFS use Illinois workNet as their primary source of economic and workforce development information.<sup>26</sup>



## SOURCES EMPLOYERS USE FOR WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

Source: Spring 2018 Illinois Department of Commerce Career Pathways Bidders Survey Result

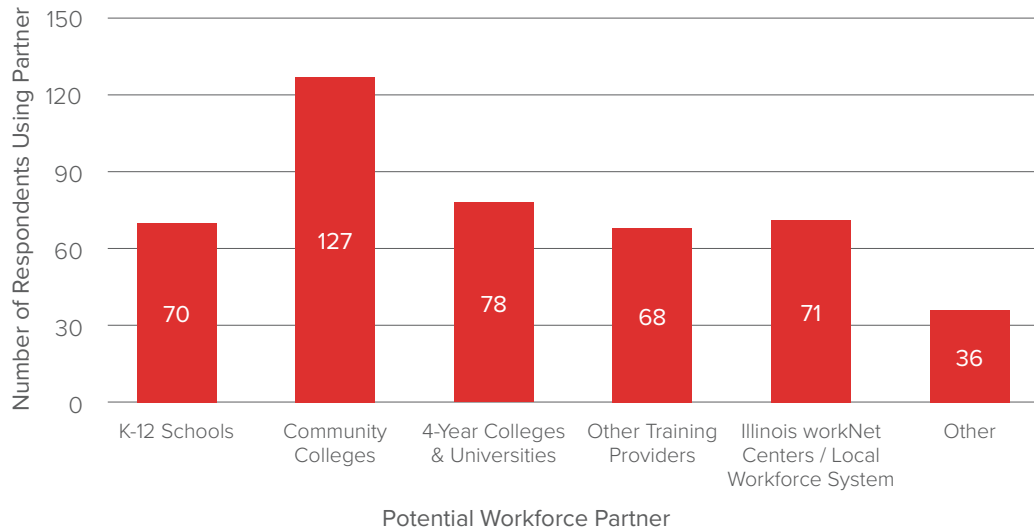


While there is significant interest in partnerships, the majority of employers we engaged did not know of existing supports or have concerns about partnership that prevent them from committing to collaboration. The focus groups indicated a general lack of awareness around local American Job Center's business services which could explain the Local Workforce System's ranking in our survey results.<sup>27</sup> Conversations during the focus groups for this report revealed that some manufacturing and health care employers are unaware of the American Job Center's services and how to leverage the system's offerings for their needs.<sup>28</sup> During the focus groups, participants noted that some employers view "government"-led business convenings (which respondents often used interchangeably with the WFS) skeptically. Using this information, the WFS, and American Job Centers specifically, should set up employers or employer intermediaries (e.g. Technology & Manufacturing Association) to lead employer partnerships and invest in marketing campaigns to enhance its brand with employers.



## EMPLOYERS' PRIMARY WORKFORCE SYSTEM STAKEHOLDERS PARTNERS

Source: 2018-2019 IBST Employer Survey



### Finding Two: Simplify Workforce Development Systems Services & Improve the Quality of Candidates

Another prominent theme that emerged from the employer feedback was that employers expect and need higher quality candidates from the WFS system and that they want a more streamlined way to access WFS services. Employers ranked improved candidate matching as the change most likely to entice their company to use the WFS' services; a more simplified way to contact public agencies ranked second.

The focus groups and survey responses provide more clarity on what employers mean by improving candidate quality. Technical training of candidates and incumbent workers were the highest scored services that would help companies overcome difficulties in finding and retaining talent. Both manufacturing and health care employers shared that employability or "soft skills"<sup>29</sup> are at least as valued as finding and retaining talent. In fact, the most frequent theme during focus groups was a frustration with finding candidates with basic employability skills; a repeated refrain of struggling to find candidates with a work ethic, interest, punctuality, clear background and/or drug test. One employer wrote on the survey, "Work on creating a pool [of] high-quality applicants so that [the] people you send make employers want more. If employers aren't coming to you first for subsequent hires, there's a reason."<sup>30</sup>



## EMPLOYERS' DESIRED CHANGES TO THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

Source: IBST Employer Survey



The focus groups revealed that challenges went beyond lacking employability skills sets to also include what some employers perceive as generational differences in preferred work schedules. Several employers noted that Baby Boomers' (who are both employees and owners) desire maximizing overtime while young adults desire work-life balance. In sectors like health care and manufacturing where twelve-hour shifts and sporadic scheduling may require overtime, employers found it challenging to retain young adults who they assumed expect more traditional, first shift, forty-hour jobs. While there may be some generational variance in balancing professional and personal obligations, research also indicates that the perceived desire for more free time is partially due to increasing demands on younger generations' time; young adults who are also parents and going to school (a population that often overlaps with apprentices, who are by definition attending school and have an average age of 28<sup>31</sup>) are often balancing more out-of-work responsibilities than previous generations.<sup>32</sup> Regardless of the reasons for a generational divide, the overall sentiment was that businesses must also adapt to meet the needs of the new workforce.

Even if the WFS improves candidate quality, Illinois' employers may fail to connect with skilled talent if the WFS remains difficult to navigate. As IBST found, there is no unifying message, collateral, or point of contact among the state's talent developers.<sup>33</sup> This is a symptom of a problem: the WFS does not have a uniform system for understanding and meetings employers needs or referring employers to supports. The webinar participants also highlighted additional complications: Chambers of Commerce, although not included as members of the WFS for this report, nor considered part of the public sector WFS by some WFS stakeholders, consider themselves to play the same role. Chambers noted they have direct and deep relationships with the business community and are often the first agency that businesses approach when

they need support. Chamber representatives also see themselves as filling a vital service in talent pipeline development; as public funding shifts to hard skill development, they are working on soft skills and career awareness activities. One webinar participant noted: “In addition to the tools and resources, Chamber’s need access to money. We are funded through membership dollars, but businesses and education are increasingly looking to Chambers to lead workforce efforts in their community. Other entities can tap workforce dollars but Chamber cannot ... We are not short on ideas in our community to improve our workforce skills, we are short on dollars.”<sup>34</sup> While some Chambers’ career exploration and early academic intervention programs may not easily fall under the state’s primary workforce funding stream (namely WIOA), the state does issue innovation grants for which Chambers are eligible to receive; that Chambers may feel excluded from funding is a critical misconception that DCEO should work to overcome. The Chambers’ precarious position in the WFS highlights that the State needs to streamline its delivery to employers while, perhaps paradoxically, expanding the scope of its influence, messaging and technical assistance to include natural points of contact such as the Chamber. Both points are true. While employers need a simple system for securing support, the system of support should formally include Chambers so that the WFS more fully benefits from the services the Chamber provides.

Beyond employers struggling to understand the WFS’ web of services, employers also noted that agencies’ websites are confusing and resources are unreliable. Some people in the manufacturing focus group, for example, mentioned that the Illinois workNet site is cumbersome and that local workforce boards’ and K-12 systems’ involvement and capacity varied by region.<sup>35</sup> With the first recommendation in the solution section, YI provides strategies for simplifying the employer experience, drawing from IBST’s research.<sup>36</sup> Improved system delivery will create more capacity for the WFS to support WBL, which as the following section indicates, employers are anxiously anticipating.

### **Finding Three: Employers are Interested in (and Often Using) WBL**

Beyond exploring employers’ needs when engaging with the WFS, this research examined employers’ interest in WBL. Economic and workforce development agencies and education systems are increasingly using this strategy to develop job seekers’ skills while also connecting companies to talent holding the in-demand skills they are seeking. We asked employers about their awareness, interest, and use of five WBL strategies that are in Illinois’ Career Pathways Dictionary: career exploration, team-based challenge, career development, registered apprenticeships, and other apprenticeships. Employers are most familiar with and most often use career development experiences like internships. Career exploration was the second most interesting WBL strategy, which aligns with many employers’ need to increase interest in their fields. Employers are least familiar with and use the least team-based learning. Given employers strong interest in exposing talent to their industries, Illinois can highlight how WBL builds participants understanding and interest in participating employers’ fields.

Although employers are interested in apprenticeship, they offer apprenticeships at lower rates than expected given their level of interest. With political momentum and increasing funding

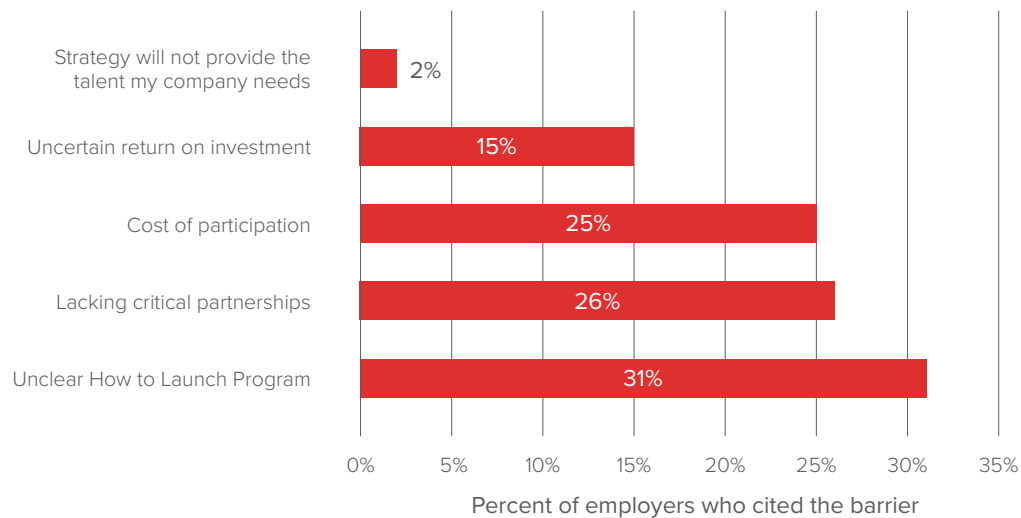


around apprenticeship at both the federal and state level, WFS efforts should explore how to bridge the gap between interest and use in apprenticeship as a strategy among the state’s employers. The survey found slightly greater interest in Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship than in other apprenticeship models, but this could be due to a slight over-representation of responses from manufacturing organizations, a field that has long embraced Registered Apprenticeship.

There is a disconnect between interest and use of all WBL strategies, which indicates barriers exist for employers willing to pursue these promising talent development approaches. In a past survey of employers, YI found that the most common reason for employers not engaging in career pathway opportunities was that they are unclear on how to implement the program, followed closely by lacking the necessary partnerships and high cost of creating and running the program.<sup>37</sup> The WFS system should address this concern by dedicating resources to helping employers implement WBL learning programs, which is discussed in the recommendations section.

### KEY BARRIERS FOR PARTICIPATING IN CAREER PATHWAYS

Source: Spring 2018 Illinois Department of Commerce Career Pathways Bidders Survey Results



### Finding Four: Willing to Partner with WIOA Populations

As many employers struggle to fill positions, it creates an opportunity to boost those employers’ interest in hiring talent that they may traditionally fear hold insurmountable barriers to employment. Those WIOA-eligible populations like youth disconnected from work and school often face obstacles to securing employment and after receiving training and services to overcome these barriers, are an underused pipeline of talent. Despite these barriers, the data collected in this research suggests that employers are in fact interested in working with WIOA-eligible populations. Specifically, employers rated veterans as the most desirable WIOA



population and disconnected youth were a close second. Returning citizens was the group from which employers were least likely to hire, yet many employers are open to working with this population.

There is variation between the manufacturing and health care sectors in the populations each is willing to work with. In manufacturing, veterans and out-of-school youth were the most appealing to employers but the long-term unemployed and people with disabilities were the least desirable. By extension, this means that manufacturers more favorably view individuals with involvement in the criminal justice system than other employers. This is promising for those seeking to advance equity in a state where half of its prison population is African-American.<sup>38</sup> However, future research should explore how to overcome misgivings around individuals with disabilities working in a manufacturing setting, particularly given anecdotal evidence that individuals with disabilities often can perform this work with few accommodations.<sup>39</sup>

Health care companies ranked returning citizens and English language learners as the two WIOA populations that they are least likely to hire. The health care-centered focus group participants cited legal regulations as the cause for restriction. If this concern is out of alignment with regulations, agencies should provide guidance addressing this perceived obstacle.

Despite employers' openness to hiring from WIOA populations, they marked publicly-provided supports (such as childcare or transportation vouchers) as the tools that they least need to improve recruitment or retention. This either speaks to the misunderstanding that employers have of how to work well with WIOA-eligible populations or signals they currently do not work with a significant number of WIOA-eligible populations. As some employers noted during the focus groups, they do not see hiring WIOA-eligible populations as a charitable act and therefore understandably do not task themselves with identifying how to best work with people with barriers. The WFS (including the community-based organizations that provide case management services to marginalized groups) should handle the work needed to ensure WIOA-eligible participants meet employers' expectations and remain successful in the workplace.

YI has found several strategies that support individuals throughout the employment lifecycle. Barrier reduction initiatives (such as funds dedicated to offsetting the cost of transportation and childcare) and explicit mentorship and case management services are critical in helping individuals remain successful on the job.<sup>40</sup> Although employers may not identify barrier reduction funding as critical to their success, if the WFS is to prioritize the employment of WIOA populations while simultaneously meeting employers' expectations for quality candidates, the state should invest resources into alleviating WIOA-eligible residents' barriers.



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPORTING EMPLOYER AND COMMUNITY NEEDS

Employers named three critical solutions that increase their interest in using services offered to companies:

- 
- Simplify the WFS so employers only have one point of contact.
- 
- Improve the quality of candidate referrals, ensuring they have the necessary skills and interest in their respective industries.
- 
- Build employers' understanding of how WBL strategies can meet their talent development needs and support employers in launching WBL programs.
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Although workforce development addresses both employers' as well as candidates' needs, by strategically addressing employers' pain points, state agencies can improve outcomes for the most vulnerable job-seekers, many of whom are WIOA-eligible.

The following recommendations simplify navigating the WFS, improve candidate quality, and increase employers' ability to offer WBL learning, particularly for WIOA-eligible populations. Given the Governor's call for expanding economic opportunity for disenfranchised communities,<sup>41</sup> all of these strategies intentionally focus on increasing the likelihood that populations that are disproportionately underemployed or unemployed secure careers with a living wage while also meeting employer needs. The section closes with marketing-related recommendations that ensure talent pools (particularly young adults) and employers receive targeted messages that ultimately address employer pain points and, in turn, increase job opportunities for marginalized communities.

## **Solution 1: Simplify the Employer Experience by Taking an Iterative Approach to a Single-Point of Contact WFS**

Employers shared that creating one point of contact across the public WFS is the change most likely to make them use the system. Currently, business leaders can choose to contact their local workforce board, American Job Center, or secondary through postsecondary educational institutions for assistance with their talent demand needs. As noted, employers





also seek the support of organizations outside of the public WFS, namely Chambers of Commerce. Although multiple potential entry points into the WFS can support a “no wrong door” approach to service delivery, this tactic only works if employers’ initial point of contact can thoroughly address all of their needs or when not, can refer the employer to the WFS partner who will fill a service gap. Based on employer feedback, this seamless referral and system navigation is currently lacking. There are several ways Illinois could simplify employer services:

**Long-Term Solution:** Ultimately, employers need to have one point of contact that thoroughly understands their needs, walks employers through the process of receiving supports, confirms services are satisfactory, and adjusts services as the employers’ needs evolve. This WFS Navigator needs in-depth knowledge of local services and stakeholders in order to effectively and efficiently connect employers with the appropriate partners and resources. Yet achieving this level of knowledge for each of the state’s disparate regions is unattainable for one person. Therefore, the state should make a long-term plan to invest in multiple WFS Navigators that represent different localities. The state could mandate that these WFS Navigators represent each of the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIA), although the IBST should identify the local entities that are best positioned to manage and oversee the WFS Navigator positions.

While having WFS Navigators distributed throughout the state would address the need for localized experts capable of helping employers connect with the appropriate WFS agencies, employers may not know which WFS Navigator corresponds to their regions. Therefore, the long-term solution for simplifying the WFS is requiring a central point of contact that is universal throughout the state. One method for creating such system is offering a statewide hotline. WFS experts who shared their feedback on this recommendation noted that the hotline should avoid the depersonalization that comes from automation. Instead, employers should connect with a knowledgeable representative as soon as possible. The infrastructure for such a hotline already exists. DCEO administers the First Stop Business Information hotline that is designed to help small businesses and entrepreneurs “obtain comprehensive regulatory and permitting information.”<sup>42</sup> With additional training, the First Stop Business Services representatives could connect employers of all sizes to the local WFS Navigator who can assist with talent-specific needs.

There are examples from other states, like Florida, that have a toll-free, statewide number to connect employers to various workforce agencies.<sup>43</sup> However, employer feedback points to the need for Illinois to move one step further by creating a hotline where the ultimate outcome is to match employers to the full range of service providers that can provide technical assistance around a full range of business needs including talent development, marketing, regulatory and tax compliance, and product and service design.

As an example of how the hotline would work, an employer requiring any form of assistance would call the First Stop Hotline (prominently advertised on the homepage of Illinois WorkNet and all other WFS partner agencies’ websites). A First Stop representative would then



determine the employers' needs. For services unrelated to workforce development, the hotline representative would transfer the caller to the appropriate state agency or department; for all issues concerning talent development, the First Stop hotline employee would connect the employer to their local WFS Navigator. The WFS Navigator would then conduct a thorough assessment of the employer's talent needs and challenges, direct the employer to the appropriate WFS parties (including the Chambers and other private providers), and continue to assist with talent development strategy (including WBL) and implementation. The WFS Navigator also would be responsible for ensuring supports are satisfactory and adjusting when additional assistance is needed. The WFS Navigator would therefore replace the apprenticeship-specific navigators that the state implemented this year. Given the expertise navigators would hold in both WBL and local service providers, they could serve all employers, not just those interested in apprenticeships. A more detailed discussion of the WFS Navigator position's relationship to apprenticeship is provided in Solution 3.

The hotline will only address the need for a singular point of contact if the hotline staff and WFS providers have the resources, training, and clearly-defined roles and responsibilities necessary for the system to succeed. In order to raise awareness around the hotline and its ability to help navigate the complicated array of state agencies and private providers, including those in the WFS, the state should prioritize the IBST's recommendation to unify the WFS message and branding. These messages should also align with a general message of business supports available through DCEO and other state agencies. Both the messaging and branding should emphasize the hotline as the primary vehicle for receiving services.

Implementing the hotline, updating statewide branding, and staffing a network of WFS Navigators is a long-term simplification strategy that will take time and resources and will only work if all WFS partner agencies agree upon which distinct services they offer and, when overlapping services exist, whom should be the initial point of contact with an employer. Furthermore, the state will need to invest in continuous training to ensure First Stop hotline representatives have up-to-date contact information for local WFS Navigators and other business service providers.

**Immediate Solutions:** While a hotline is a long-term solution, Illinois should simplify and expedite the current process for connecting employers to supports. The statewide IBST should task each local IBST with mapping their regions' existing WFS providers and identifying who is responsible for which employer-facing services. An exercise in mapping outreach and referrals would 1) clarify and coordinate the current "no wrong door" approach for employers, 2) minimize the fatigue employers have reported by minimizing instances where multiple WFS partners engage employers, and 3) provide the foundation for future WFS Navigators' referral efforts.

As another interim step, the state should update and publicize the Illinois workNet website's Service Finder tool as a temporary strategy for connecting businesses to local service providers. The Service Finder tool, which allows employers to enter their zip code and find the nearest Illinois workNet site and other local training and service providers, provides some clarity on the wide range of services available in each of the state's local workforce areas.<sup>44</sup>



However, the tool has limited impact due to the inconsistent content quality and difficulty in accessing the tool on the workNet website.

Currently, the Service Finder requires providers to upload their own information into the system which suggests that the information in the tool is not comprehensive or up-to-date. Until the hotline and the accompanying network of WFS Navigators and staff are fully implemented, the state should use the aforementioned mapping exercise to help the state upload any missing data into the tool. Given employers' feedback that the WFS is difficult to navigate, this tool should feature prominently on the homepage so that employers can quickly connect with local providers. The updated First Stop hotline would ultimately serve as the primary tool for employers needing assistance connecting with the WFS, but addressing the Service Finder tool's visibility and data challenges in the near future would prepare the necessary infrastructure to make the hotline and corresponding navigators effective.

## **Solution 2: Improve Candidate Quality Through Credentialing and Support Services**

Once the employer can more easily connect with the WFS, it is critical that they receive quality candidates who are equipped with the employability and technical skills that employers need as well as interest in the occupation they are placed into. The WFS can ensure that the job seekers it serves meet employers' demand for quality by 1) emphasizing early talent development, 2) creating a statewide employability credential, and 3) developing a Talent Retention Grant that addresses ongoing case management needs of multi-barrier individuals. In addition to addressing the soft skills gap that employers noted in the surveys and focus groups, the state should also use WBL strategies to increase interest in and build technical skills for in-demand occupations. Strategies for expanding WBL uptake are discussed later under Solution 3: Leveraging WBL section.

### Early Talent Development

Employers, chambers, and WFS experts noted during the webinar that efforts for improving candidate quality must begin much earlier than the current focus on high school career and college readiness. One participant mentioned, "business and education need to develop stronger relationships so that the K-12 system truly understands the needs of the employers. If we are waiting until eleventh or twelfth grade to try to make kids 'work ready,' it's too late."<sup>45</sup> To provide earlier exposure to workplace expectations and keep students engaged, the WFS, and the school system in particular, should enable greater use of project-based and experiential-based learning during students' middle and even elementary school experiences. The WFS Navigators, who currently focus on apprenticeships but would eventually expand their knowledge to all WBL solutions across the Continuum of WBL Experiences (see below), should receive training on effective WBL strategies for young students and then train their local partners on the process for implementing such strategies. The state should also award innovation grants to school districts to assist them in integrating WBL strategies throughout a student's education.



## CONTINUUM OF EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT & WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Source: Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary



### Employability Credential

When employers recruit new employees, many have found it difficult to determine a candidate's ability to meet expectations around attendance and punctuality, work ethic, and other indicators of job-readiness. Employers have also found many candidates provided by the WFS likewise unable to meet their needs. By creating a standard certification that recognizes a job seeker's attainment of industry-vetted employability competencies, the state can remove some of the uncertainty of candidates' skills. This training and evaluation process will address employers' concerns around the soft skills gap but will only work if there is broad, high-quality implementation and credibility with employers. One way to achieve this is Illinois mandating that all WIOA-recipients and Illinois students (including secondary and postsecondary students in public institutions) obtain the employability credential before they either graduate from their school or receive WIOA training funding. While the credential could significantly improve employers' satisfaction, implementation will take time. Before making this shift, 1) employers must play a leading role in designing, rolling out, and maintaining the credential in order for employers to consider the credential meaningful and 2) Illinois must create training so that WIOA providers and schools are equipped to build the credentialing process into their work. Without appropriate training and the creation of a clear credentialing process that enables WIOA recipients to easily meet this requirement, the credential could prevent WIOA recipients from placing clients at worksites.

The state has already laid the groundwork for a credentialing initiative by passing the Illinois Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act in 2016.<sup>46</sup> The PWR Act "takes a student-based and competency-based approach to helping students achieve college and career readiness" and provides a framework for school districts to allow students to receive an endorsement that demonstrates their career readiness in one of ten sectors.<sup>47</sup> Each endorsement stipulates both technical expectations of the given sector as well as the Essential Employability Competencies (EEC) that are near-universal expectations of workplace attitudes and behaviors. These EECs align with the Illinois Essential Employability Skills framework, which was developed by DCEO, the Illinois Community College Board, employers, educators and other stakeholders and identifies the competencies that a job seeker should meet prior to engaging with an employer.<sup>48</sup> Students interested in pursuing the voluntary endorsement need to complete a series of career experiences along the Continuum of WBL Experiences. Those who complete the experiences receive an endorsement on their high school diploma.



To implement the employability credential across the WFS, the state should use the Essential Employability Skills framework to inform what competencies to include in the final job-readiness credential. Next, the state should develop a curriculum that WFS partner agencies can use to coach their job seekers on obtaining the essential employability skills. A curriculum that is adaptable to varying populations and ages will allow the state to embed career-readiness skills training into the K-16 education system and local OneStop Center's services, thereby addressing the employability skills gap that surfaced in the surveys and focus groups. Throughout this process, the creation of the credential or endorsement needs to have heavy employer involvement.

Illinois can use other states as models for a credential process. In Georgia, for example, students can earn a tiered certification through the GeorgiaBEST program. Students are evaluated on ten different employability metrics and depending on their level of competence and professional portfolio, receive either a GeorgiaBEST, GeorgiaBEST Executive, GeorgiaBEST Premiere or GeorgiaBEST Elite certificate.<sup>49</sup> The program has expanded into juvenile detention centers, which demonstrates that it could be repurposed to serve other WIOA-eligible populations. The credential not only would encourage employability skill attainment from a young age, it would also serve as an objective indicator of quality and alleviate some of the employers' concerns with hiring WIOA-eligible populations.

#### Create Talent Retention Grants Partners to Support WIOA-Eligible Populations

Although further investigation should determine the precise reasons why some employers are reluctant to hire WIOA-eligible populations, YI found employers have a general awareness that these groups, by definition of their eligibility, may face barriers to employment. Yet, employers were less interested in using supports that address these barriers. This suggests employers are open to hiring people from those populations yet may not understand the supports they need or have the interest or capacity to provide additional resources. To that end, the state should leverage nonprofit, public, and community organizations' experience with multi-barrier groups and fund them to provide case management services to WIOA training fund recipients who are connected to an employer through a long-term WBL program (including pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship). These Talent Retention Grants (or barrier reduction funding) would ensure that those WFS clients that are actively engaged with an employer have the supports needed to remain successful on the job and leave employers with a positive impression of WFS candidates.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that case management services do increase retention in WBL programs,<sup>50</sup> however, this work is only possible if agencies have the needed resources to address common challenges such as access to childcare and transportation. Previous YI research indicates that a barrier reduction fund, which is a pool of money that pays for marginalized job seekers' high-cost necessities, would help make WBL opportunities more accessible to WIOA-eligible populations.<sup>51</sup> The state should continue to identify how to fund both a barrier reduction fund as well as secure resources to support a Talent Retention Grant.



## **Solution 3: Increase Use of WBL to Build Interest and Technical and Employability Skills**

While the employability credential and Talent Retention Grants can address job readiness gaps and minimize the barriers that affect candidates' employability, employers also expect candidates to have the requisite interest and technical skills to execute vacant positions. WBL approaches have the ability to increase both awareness and capacity for specific occupations. To achieve this outcome, the state must address the pain points that prevent employers from participating in WBL programs (referenced in the Key Barriers to Work-Based Learning found in Finding Three of this report), specifically the lack of clarity around how to launch a program, the lack of critical partnerships, and the cost of participating especially considering employers felt unsure about the return on investment. The following sections describe how the state can build from current or recommended initiatives to address employers' pain points around WBL. By successfully minimizing these obstacles to WBL, the state will not only support employers, but also the job seekers who benefit from expanded opportunity.

### Leverage WFS Navigators to Educate Employers about Apprenticeship and Increase Partnerships

The state recently established an Apprenticeship Navigator Pilot Program that charges grantees with marketing apprenticeship to employers throughout the state. To avoid duplication of terminology and services, the state should merge the Apprenticeship Navigator role into the proposed WFS Navigator positions. The WFS Navigators' local expertise would position them well to 1) engage with employers and describe how WBL could meet their needs and 2) establish partnerships by connecting employers to talent-facing groups that are interested in helping prepare their job seekers for in-demand occupations. With the proper training, the WFS Navigators could educate employers about the process for launching a WBL program, make the connections to implement a program, describe the return on investment, and illustrate how WBL could meet employer needs. The WFS Navigators would therefore serve as champions for not only the WFS generally, but WBL specifically. For employers who know that WBL would fit their needs and want to contact their local WFS Navigator directly (as opposed to using the First Stop Hotline), Illinois WorkNet should provide a map that shows the service area and contact information for all local WFS Navigators.

### Encourage Career Exploration and Pre-, Youth, and Apprenticeship to Build Technical Skills and Interest in Occupations

Another promising pilot program that the state should expand is the Youth Career Pathways projects. Although each grantee offers a unique portfolio of services to the youth and young adult participants in their program, many offer some combination of earn-and-learn job training, case management and career exploration in in-demand or high-turnover occupations. These grant projects address employers' needs to build interest in their industry; meet qualified, pre-screened candidates; and reduce some of the costs associated with launching a WBL program while also providing young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds with an opportunity to explore careers, receive industry-recognized credentials, and receive valuable on-the-job employability skills training.



The state should do a robust program evaluation of this project to understand the outcomes for the employers and young adults. Armed with information about the successes and stumbling blocks, the state can then replicate successful models and expand the financial and technical assistance support for WBL programs that meet a variety of WIOA-eligible populations' needs. The evaluation should also understand common barriers that prevent programs from succeeding and provide training that enables programs to overcome those common challenges.

### Marketing

Most of the employers engaged in this research noted they and their counterparts are largely unaware of services provided by the WFS. None of these aforementioned solutions will help employers if they are unaware of the programs and services that the state has either improved or created. The state should therefore invest in employer-targeted marketing campaigns that highlight changes that will build employer interest and alleviate their concerns outlined in this reports' findings. Specifically, future marketing campaigns should feature how changes will result in faster support, a simplified process for securing resources, and candidates who are better positioned to meet employers needs than in years past. Advertising should focus on the new streamlined WFS and hotline number; advertise credentialed, high-quality candidates; and promote the WFS supports that are available for addressing key pain points in recruitment, training, and retention. Webinar participants also suggested that the state create and distribute a monthly newsletter that presents a unified message and keeps employers and WFS stakeholders informed on relevant resources and events. The state should also use the key channels our research found employers use, including Illinois workNet, local workforce boards, OneStop Career centers, and Job Link. Lastly, given employer wariness of government, the state should work with entities employers trust and arrange employer networks and partners to disseminate the information.

As the workforce system is designed to meet the needs of both employers and talent-facing groups, the state should also ensure that young adults and those who will fill the talent pipeline are aware of the WFS' services and the industries that have vacancies. While the state is currently revamping its employer-facing outreach materials, they should also invest in making Illinois workNet more user-friendly and highlight information that informs young adults about in-demand occupations and how to access them.



# CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Illinois' residents, particularly youth and people of color, face high unemployment rates and lower educational attainment. Meanwhile, some of the state's employers are struggling to find qualified candidates or keep and train employees. Rather than considering this a weakness in Illinois' economy, these conditions offer state workforce and education systems the opportunity to simultaneously address the supply and demand needs of the state's labor market. By ensuring that employers can easily access the workforce system and obtain quality candidates using innovative work-based learning programs, vulnerable job seekers will experience increased opportunity. Investing in the Workforce System will allow Illinois to strike the right balance between the needs of commerce and community.





# APPENDIX A.

## EMPLOYER NEEDS SURVEY QUESTIONS

The quantitative employer feedback that is used in this report is based on a survey that was distributed across the state to employers and industry associations. The survey used the following questions to assess employer needs:

### Current Work-Based Learning Engagement

1. My company regularly partners with the following to work on talent development (Circle all that apply):
  - b. K-12 schools
  - c. Community colleges
  - d. 4-year colleges & universities
  - e. Other training providers
  - f. Illinois workNet Centers / Local Workforce System
  - g. Other:
  
2. My company is currently working with similar businesses to jointly address common opportunities and challenges.
  - c. Yes
    - Formal – Name of group
    - Informally – Provide example:
  - d. No
    - Going it alone is meeting our company’s needs.
    - My company would like to collaborate more with similar businesses

### Feedback on Workforce Development Services

3. On a scale of 1 to 5, how useful are the following with recruiting, training, and retaining qualified staff?

Service	Rating: 1 (low) – 5 (high) or NA: Not Applicable					
Activities (e.g. job shadow) that generate interest in my industry and/or occupations	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Training on developing candidates’ workplace skills (e.g. meeting employability expectations on attire and more)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Training on developing employees’ workplace skills (e.g. meeting employability expectations on attire and more)	1	2	3	4	5	NA



Service	Rating: 1 (low) – 5 (high) or NA: Not Applicable					
Training on developing candidates' technical skills	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Training on developing employees' technical skills	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Publicly provided supports (e.g. childcare or transportation vouchers) that enable candidates to join the company or staff to maintain employment	1	2	3	4	5	NA
<u>Other:</u> Please specify.						

4. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what degree would the following changes make your company more likely to use services offered by workforce and education centers and agencies (e.g. trainings)?

Service Improvement	Rating: 1 (low) – 5 (high) or NA: Not Applicable					
<u>Simplified:</u> Create one point of contact across public agencies	1	2	3	4	5	NA
<u>Candidate Matching:</u> Improvement in the quality of candidates connected to your company (e.g. on-site interviews or candidate screening)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
<u>Candidate Retention:</u> Enhanced supportive services (e.g. transportation) for candidates connected to your company to better enable their retention	1	2	3	4	5	NA
<u>Candidate Diversification:</u> Company can hire more diverse personnel	1	2	3	4	5	NA
<u>Content Effectiveness:</u> Resources (e.g. trainings or newsletters) are more reflective of the latest challenges you as an employer face	1	2	3	4	5	NA
<u>Other:</u> Please specify.						

5. Are there other services that would help your company overcome issues with finding and retaining talent?

Diversifying Your Workforce

6. On a scale of 1 to 5, how likely is your company to hire people from the following populations?



Population	Rating: 1 (low) – 5 (high)				
Out of School & Out of Work Youth (Ages 16 – 24)	1	2	3	4	5
Veterans	1	2	3	4	5
People with Disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
Returning Citizens (or Previously Justice-Involved)	1	2	3	4	5
Long-Term Unemployed	1	2	3	4	5
English Language Learners	1	2	3	4	5

***Innovative Programming***

- Illinois is piloting new strategies for increasing the number of individuals holding the professional and technical skills that employers need. Please rate your company’s awareness, use, and interest in the following workforce development strategies.

Awareness 1 (No Awareness) – 5 (Expert)

Use Never Used (N), Tried Once(O), Tried Multiple Times (M), or Use Regularly (R) (at least annually)

Interest 1 (No Interest) – 5 (Very Interested)

Population	Awareness					Use			Interest					
<u>Career Exploration Activity</u> : An activity like a job shadow or facility tour where one engages with employers and gains knowledge of an industry or occupation.	1	2	3	4	5	N	O	M	R	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Team-Based Challenge</u> : Real-world challenges tackled by a group. Participants are mentored, learn about a career, and present on outcomes at the end.	1	2	3	4	5	N	O	M	R	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Career Development</u> : Experiences, like an internship, that occur at a workplace. Participants are paid and/or receive credit from a school/college, learn core employability skills, and are evaluated on the skills they learn.	1	2	3	4	5	N	O	M	R	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Department of Labor (DOL) Registered Apprenticeships</u> : Overseen by DOL, positions are paid, combine classroom and on-the job training, and result in industry-recognized credentials.	1	2	3	4	5	N	O	M	R	1	2	3	4	5



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Population	Awareness	Use	Interest
<u>Other Apprenticeships:</u> This may include formal apprenticeships that are not registered with DOL or apprenticeships for youth between the ages of 16 and 24.	1 2 3 4 5	N O M R	1 2 3 4 5

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Company Information

- 8. How many employees in Illinois does your company have?
- 9. What city or cities do you operate in?
- 10. What is your company's sector (e.g. IT or health care)
- 11. What is your role at the company?



# APPENDIX B.

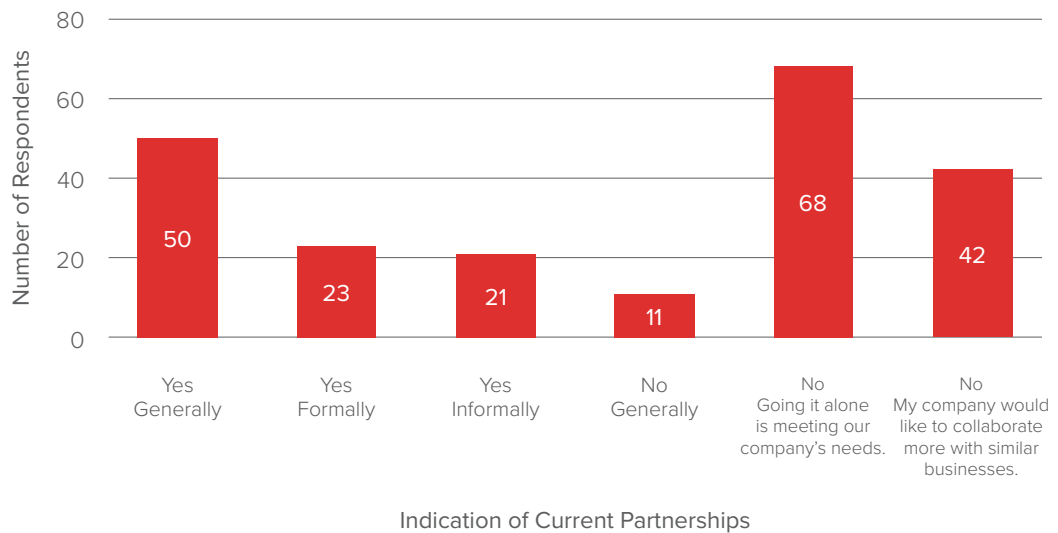
## SURVEY RESPONSES (ALL SECTORS)

### Partnerships

#### EMPLOYERS' PRIMARY WORKFORCE SYSTEM STAKEHOLDERS PARTNERS



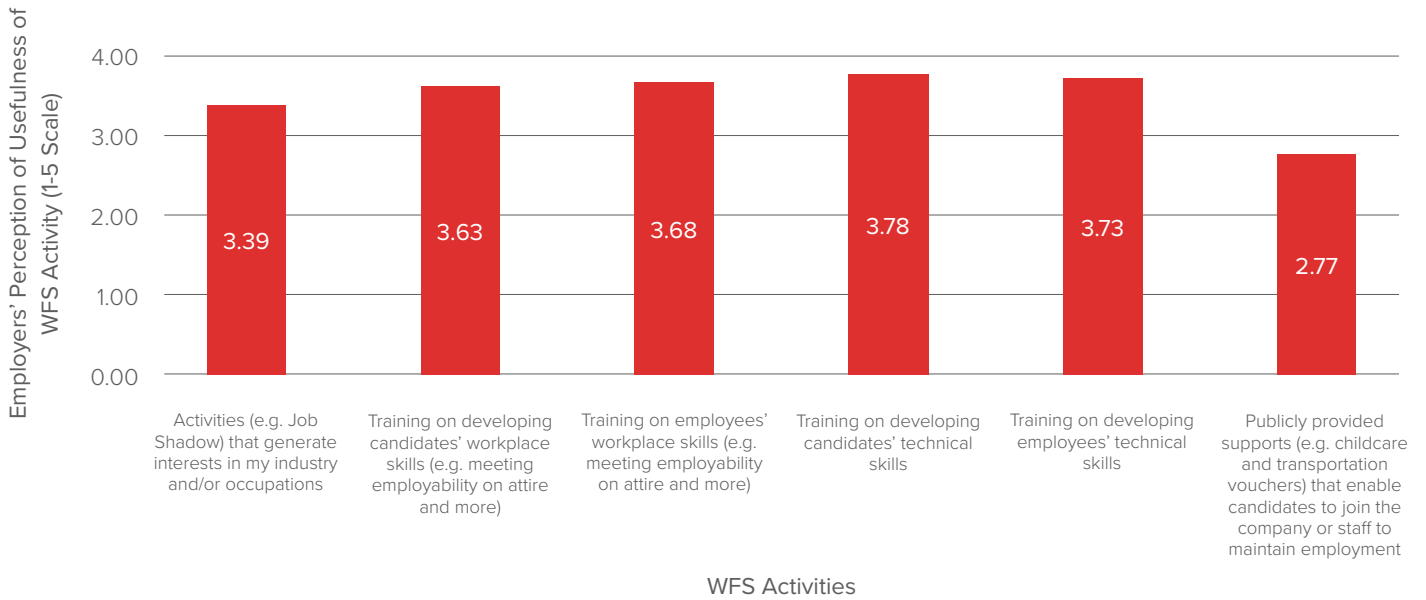
#### INTEREST IN PARTNERSHIPS



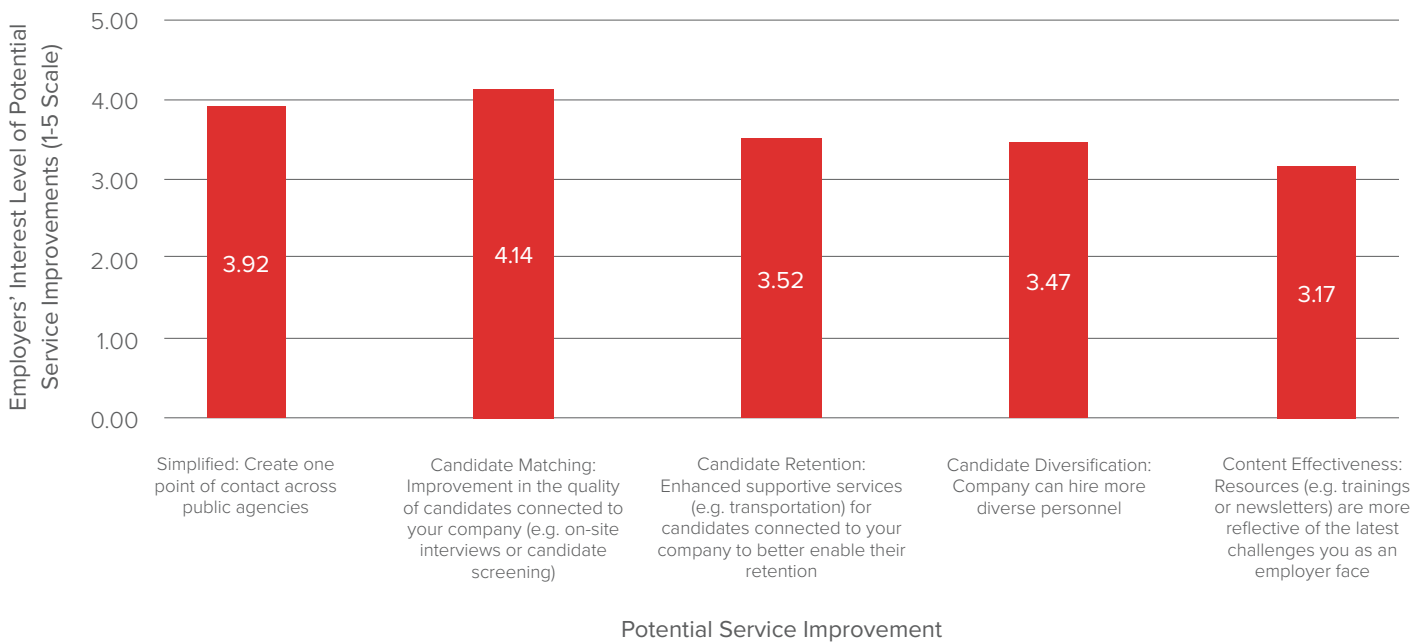


## Service Improvements

### EMPLOYERS' PERCEPTION OF VARIOUS WORKFORCE SYSTEM ACTIVITIES' UTILITY IN RECRUITING, TRAINING AND RETAINING TALENT

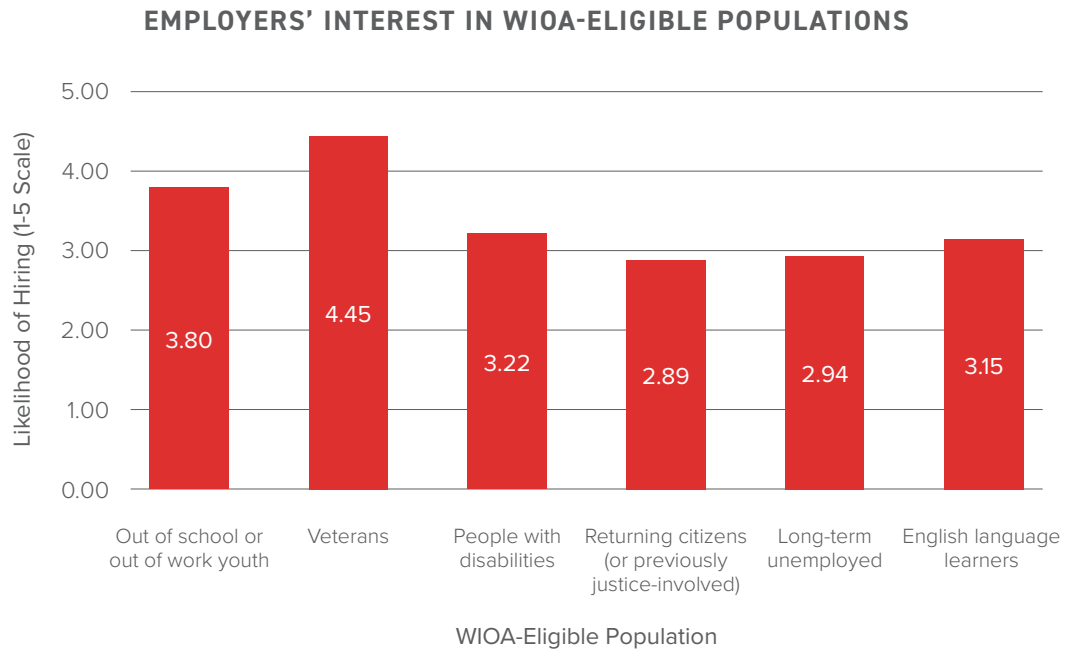


### EMPLOYERS' DESIRED CHANGES TO THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

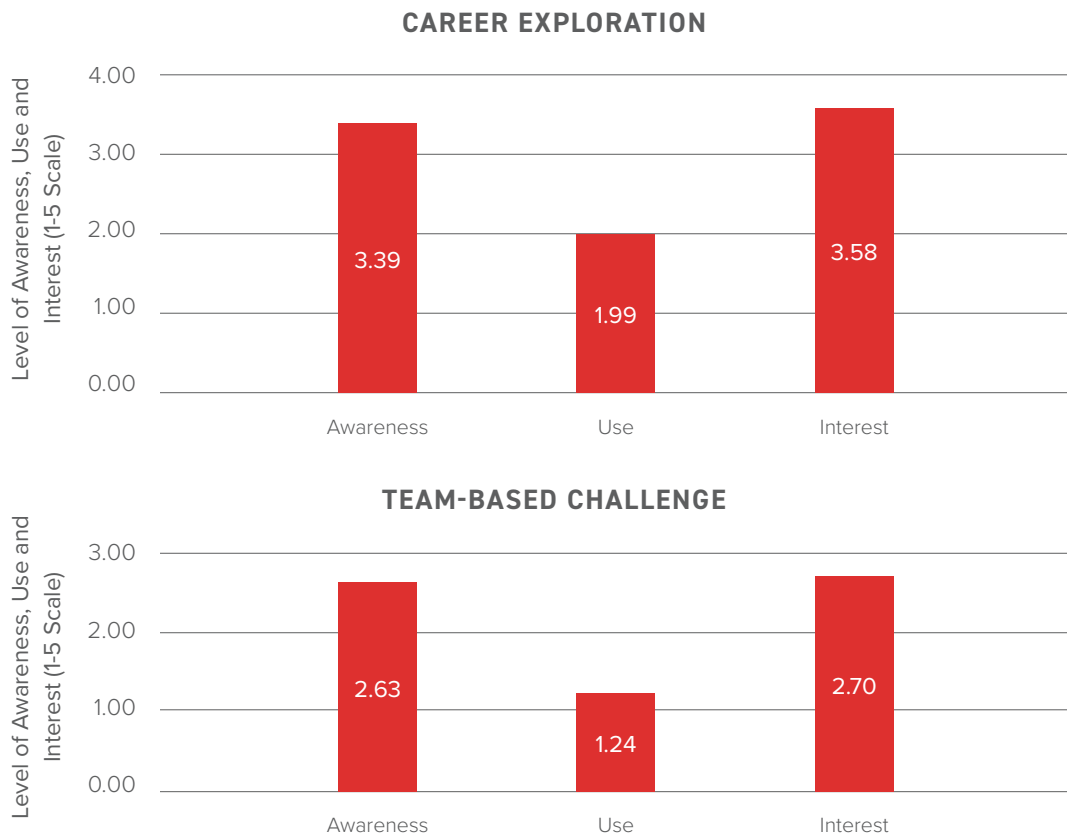




## WIOA-Eligible Populations

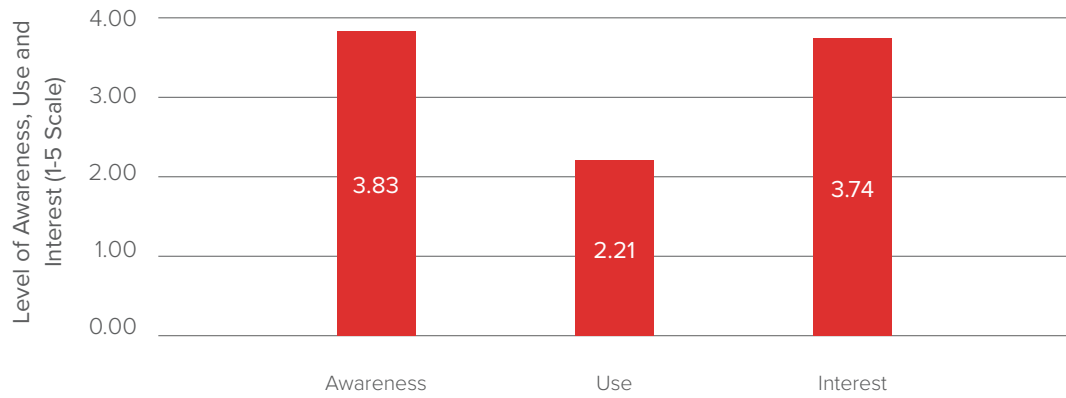


## Interest in Work-Based Learning Activities

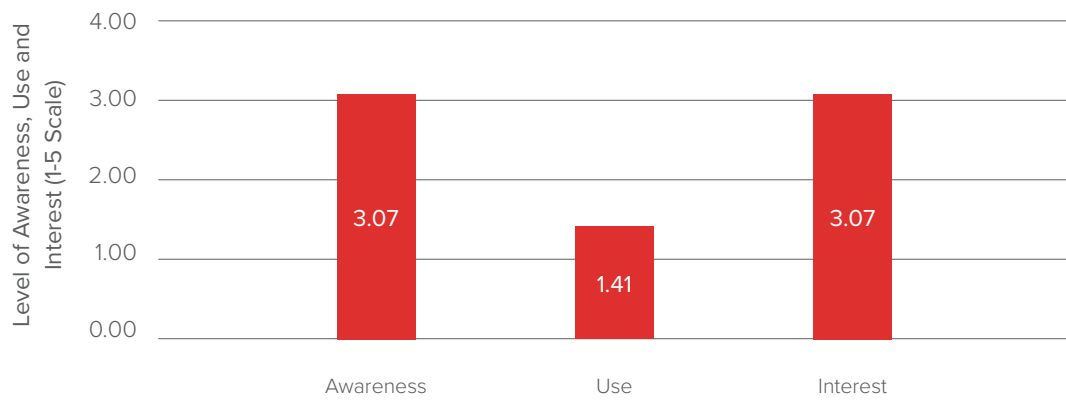




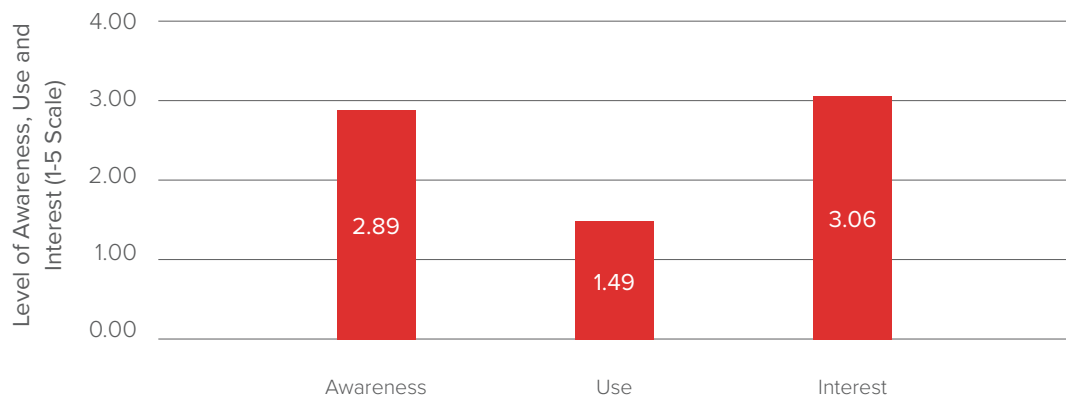
### CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE (INTERNSHIP)



### DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS



### OTHER APPRENTICESHIPS (Non-Registered and/or Youth Apprenticeships)





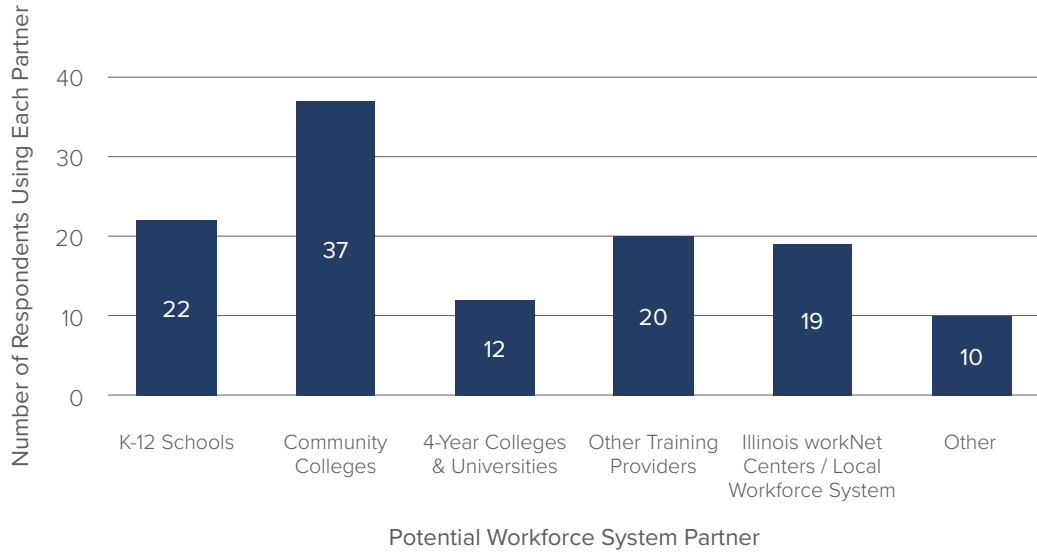


# APPENDIX C.

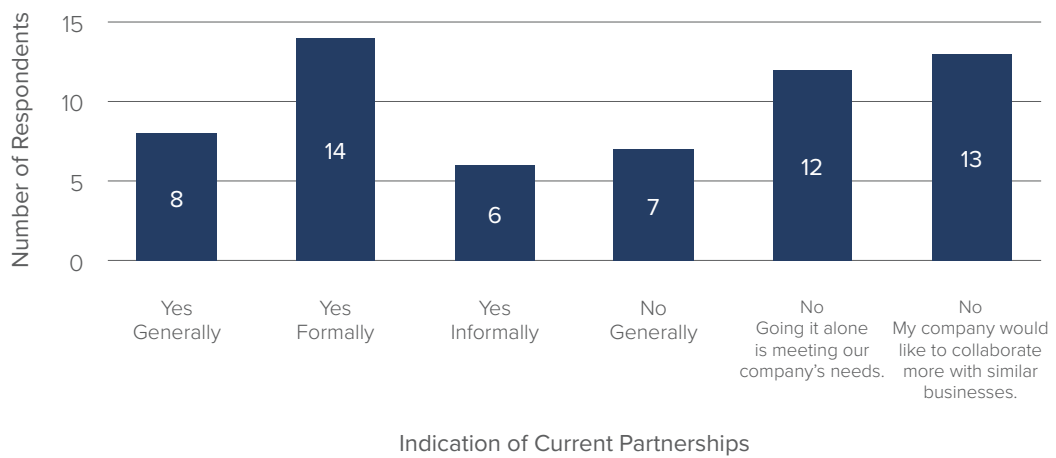
## SURVEY RESULTS (MANUFACTURING)

### Partnerships

#### WORKFORCE SYSTEM PARTNER USE



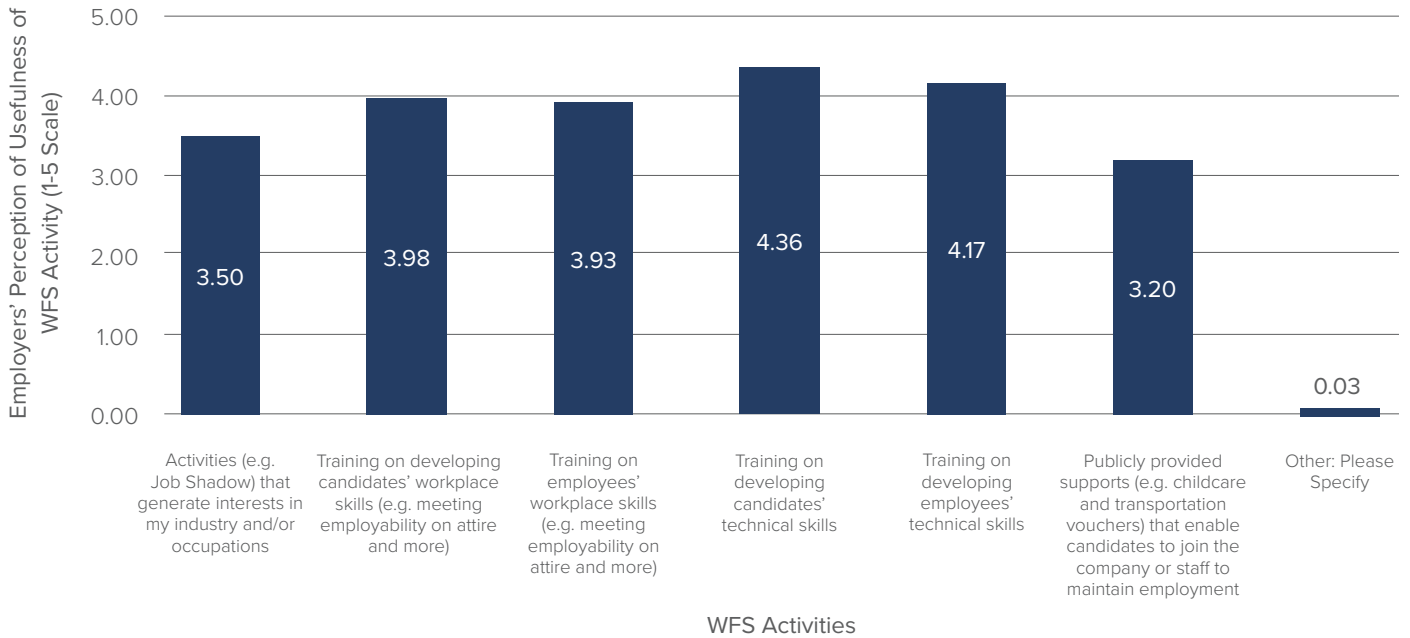
#### INTEREST IN PARTNERSHIPS



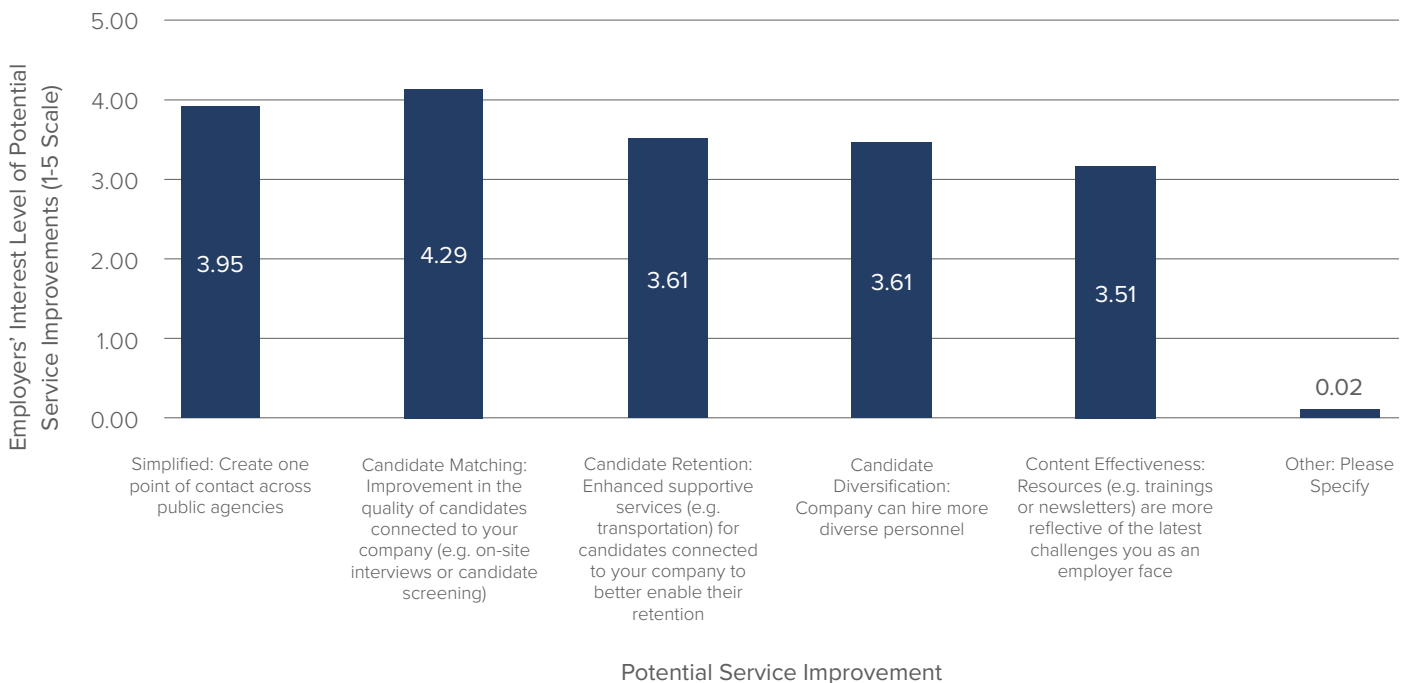


## Service Improvements

### EMPLOYERS' PERCEPTION OF VARIOUS WORKFORCE SYSTEM ACTIVITIES' UTILITY IN RECRUITING, TRAINING AND RETAINING TALENT

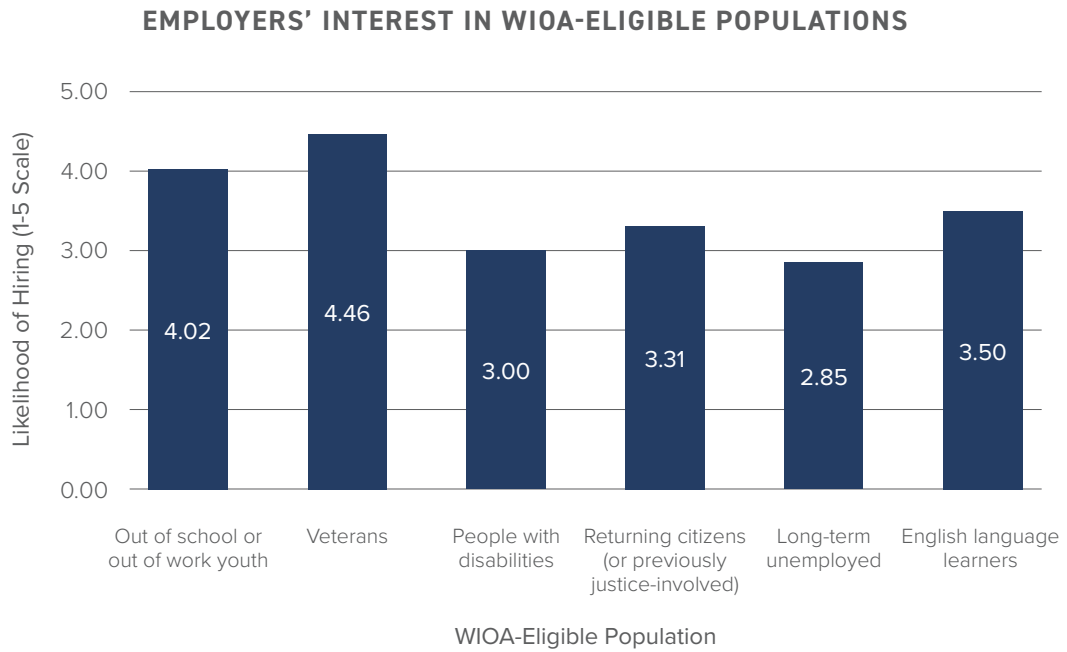


### EMPLOYERS' DESIRED CHANGES TO THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

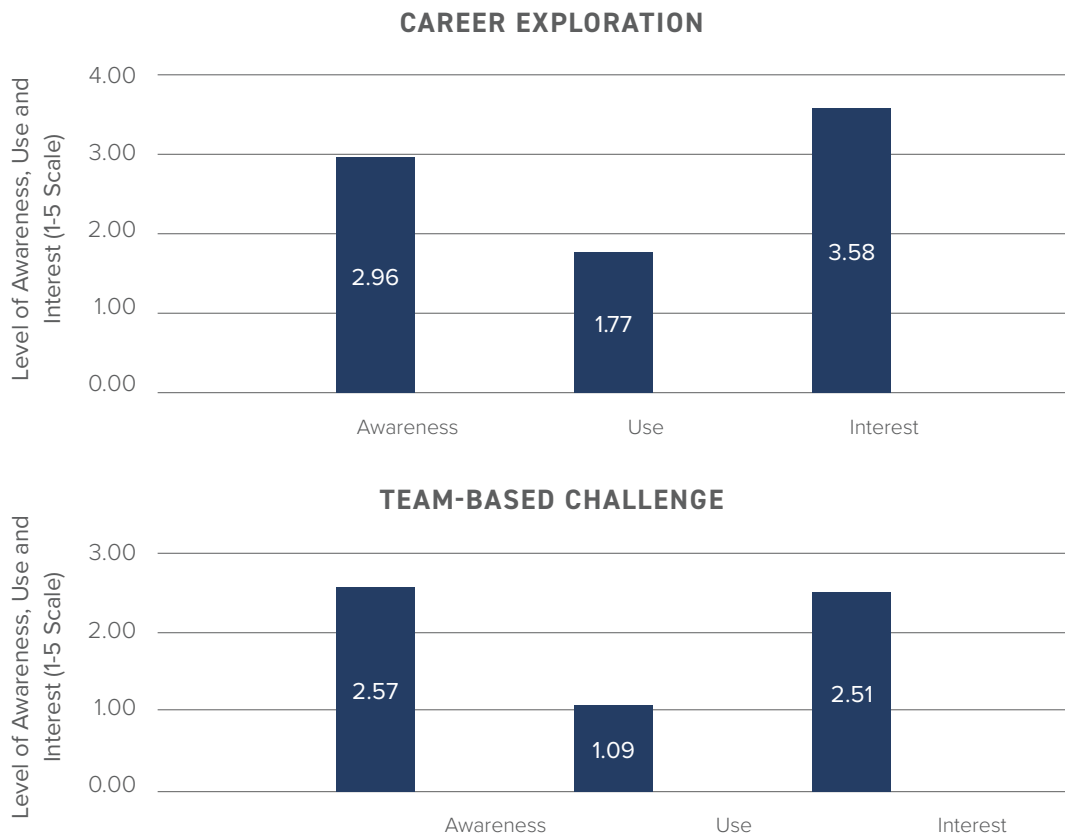




## WIOA-Eligible Populations

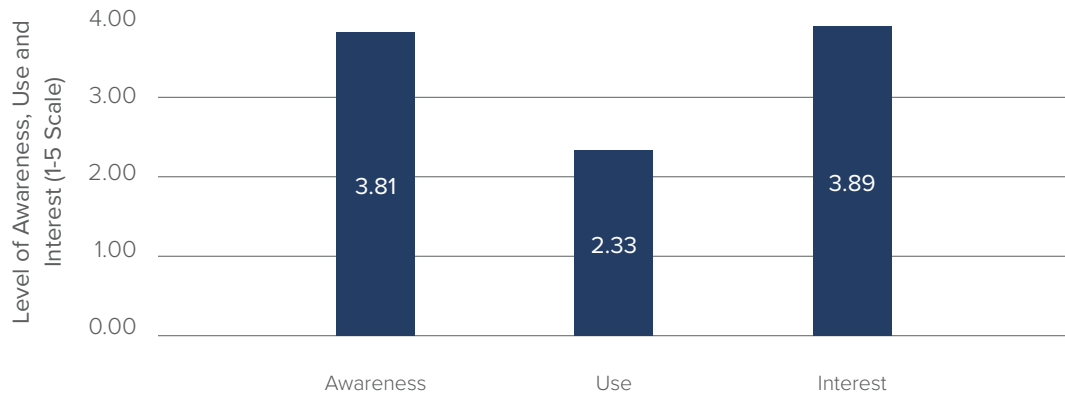


## Interest in Work-Based Learning Activities

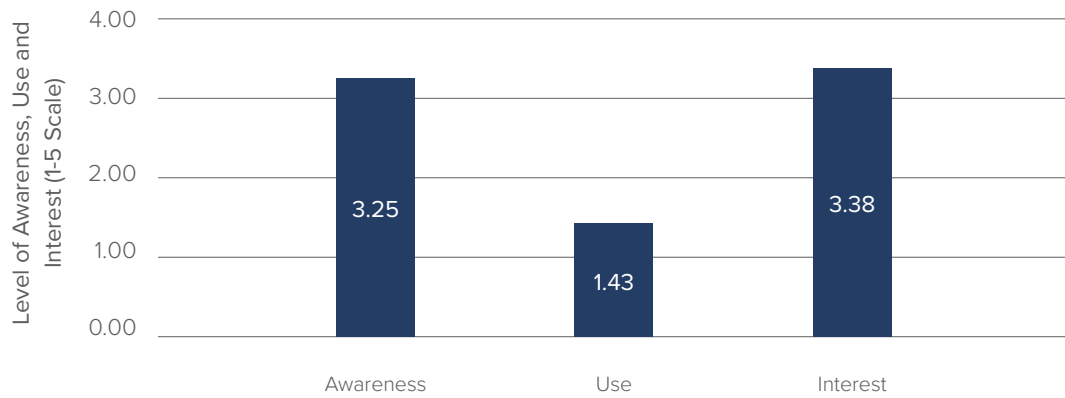




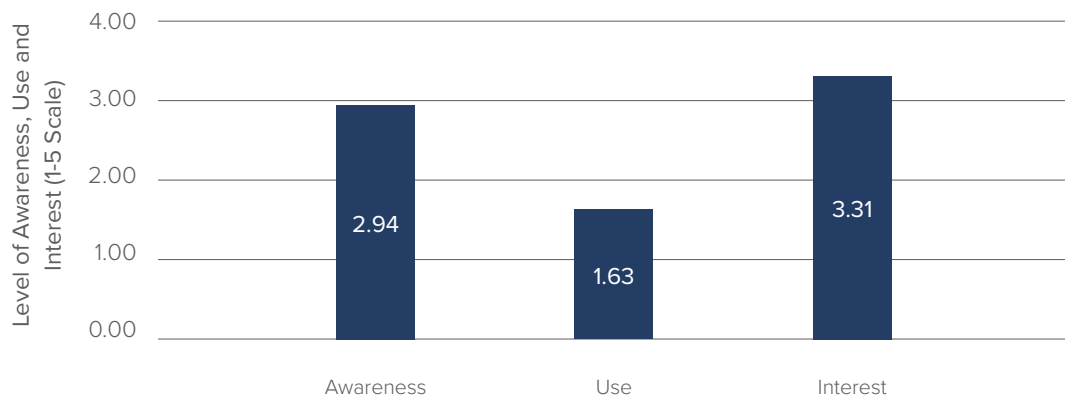
### CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE (INTERNSHIP)



### DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS



### OTHER APPRENTICESHIPS (Non-Registered and/or Youth Apprenticeships)

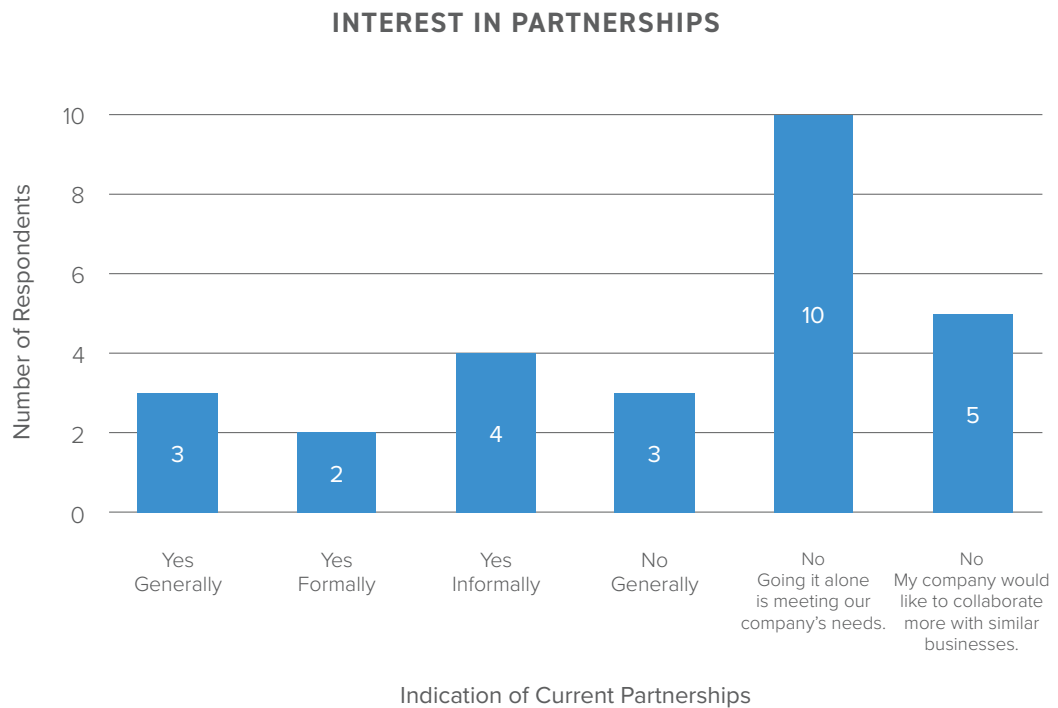
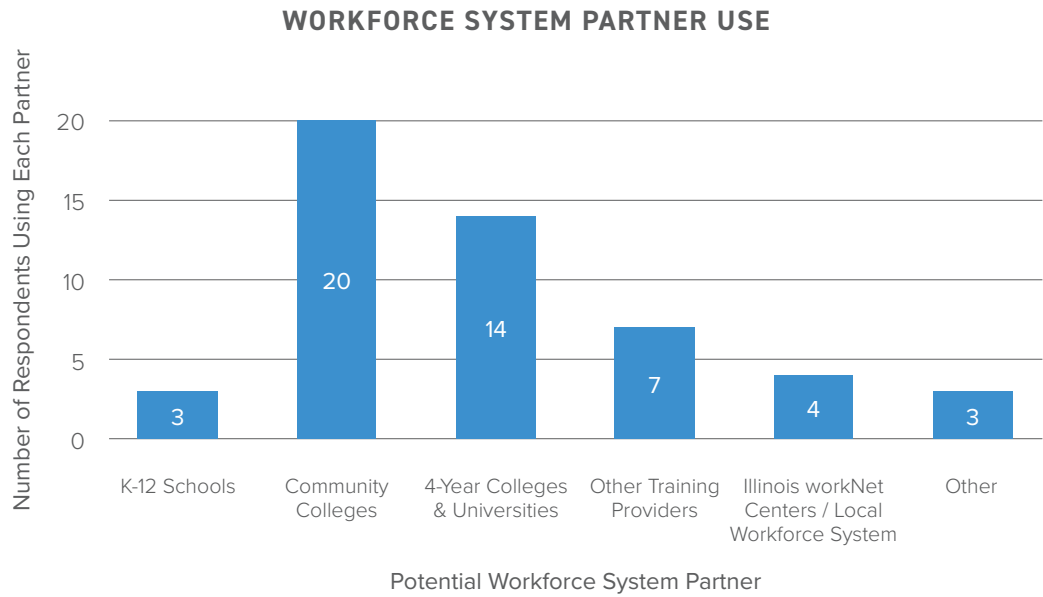




# APPENDIX D.

## SURVEY RESPONSES (HEALTHCARE)

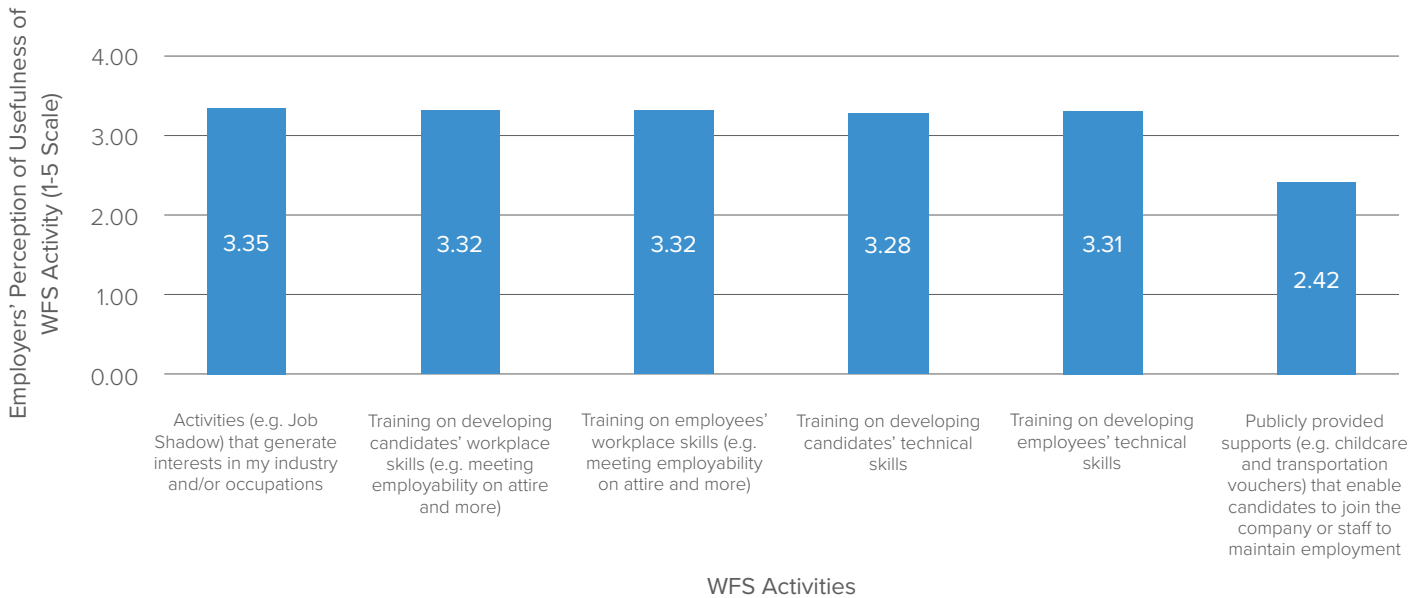
### Partnerships



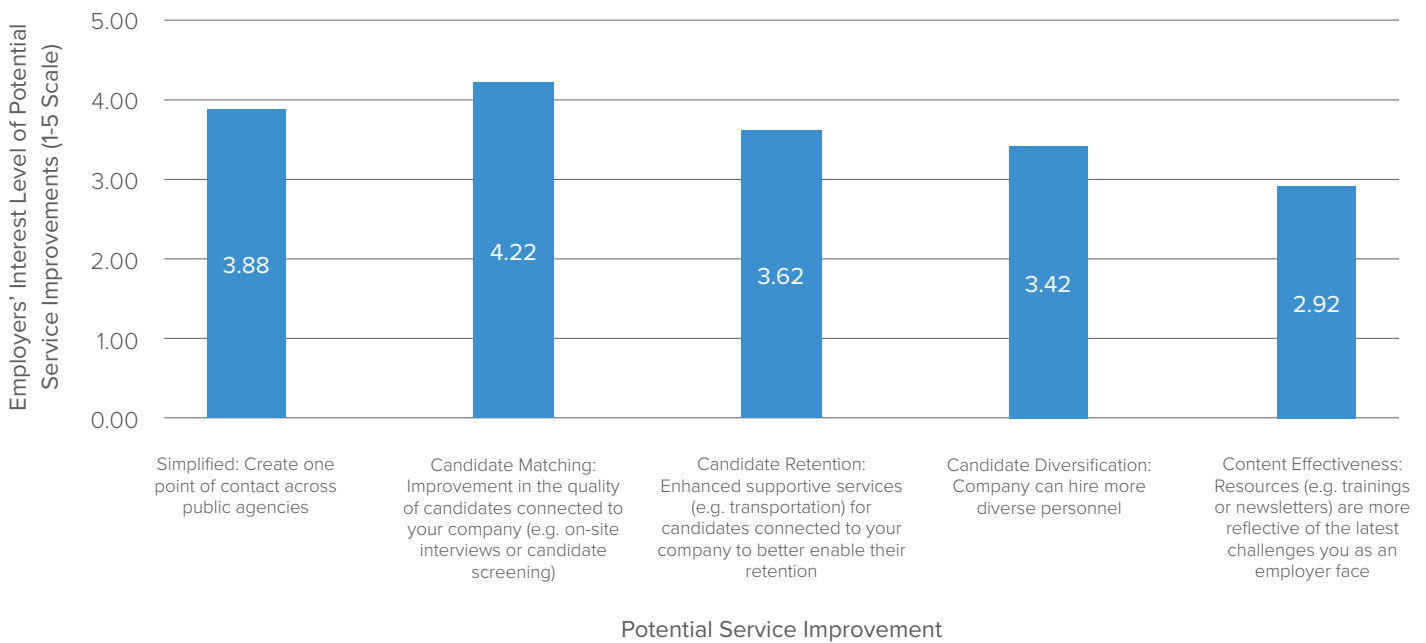


## Service Improvements

### EMPLOYERS' PERCEPTION OF VARIOUS WORKFORCE SYSTEM ACTIVITIES' UTILITY IN RECRUITING, TRAINING AND RETAINING TALENT

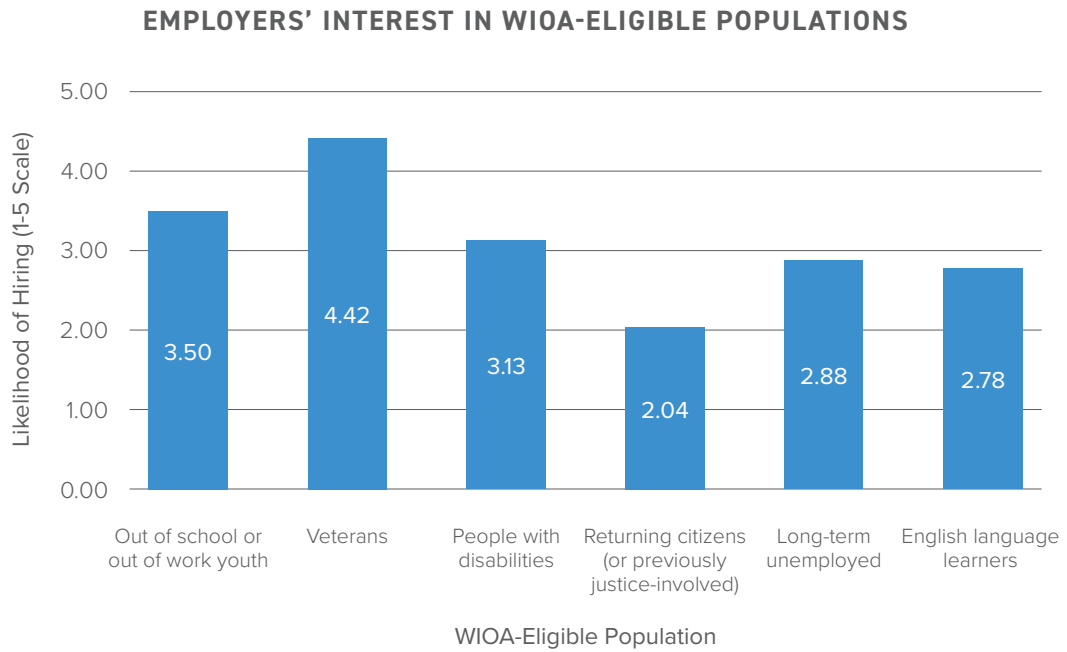


### EMPLOYERS' DESIRED CHANGES TO THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

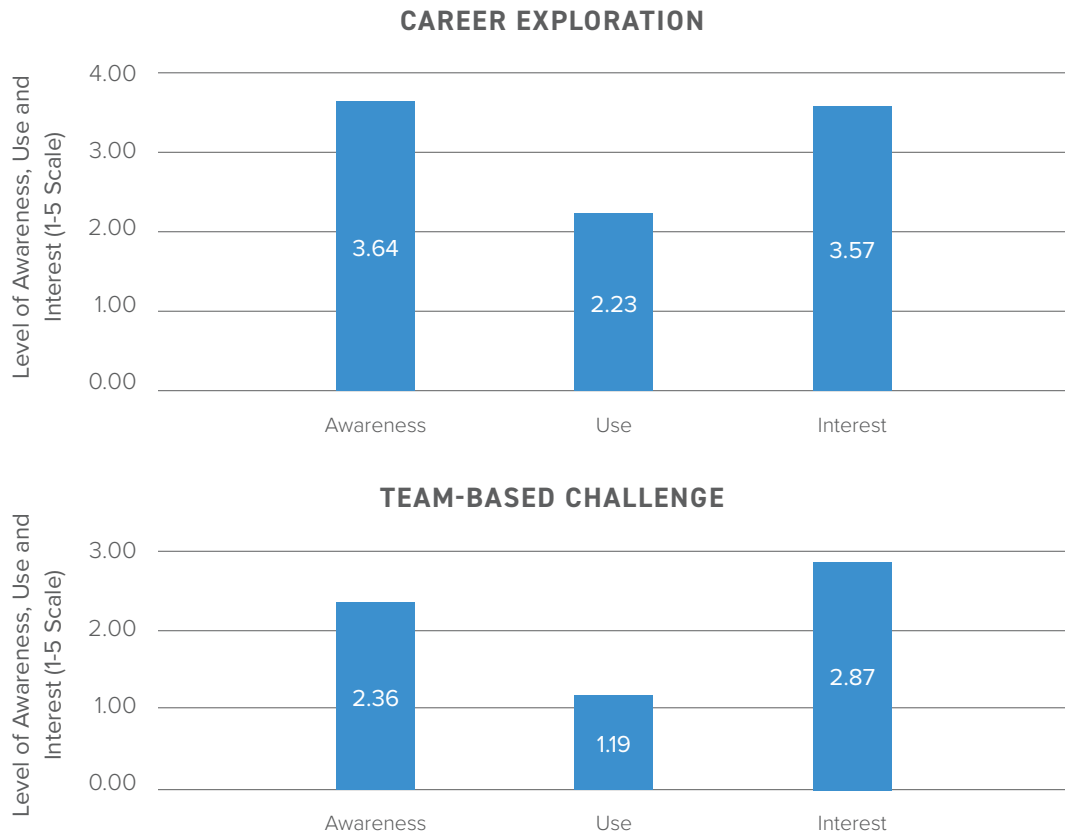




## WIOA-Eligible Populations

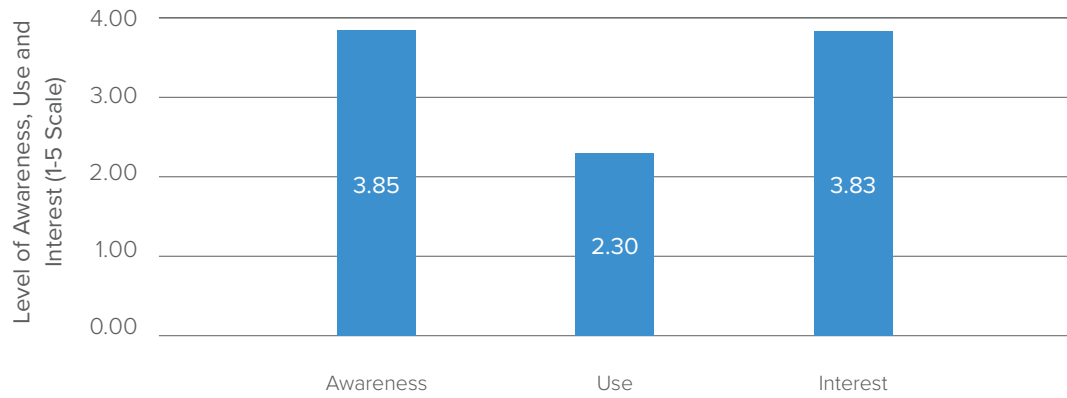


## Interest in Work-Based Learning Activities

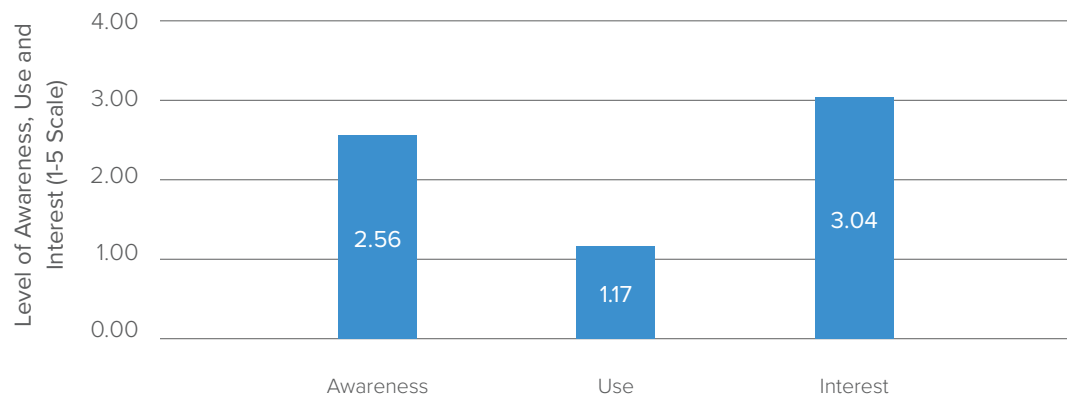




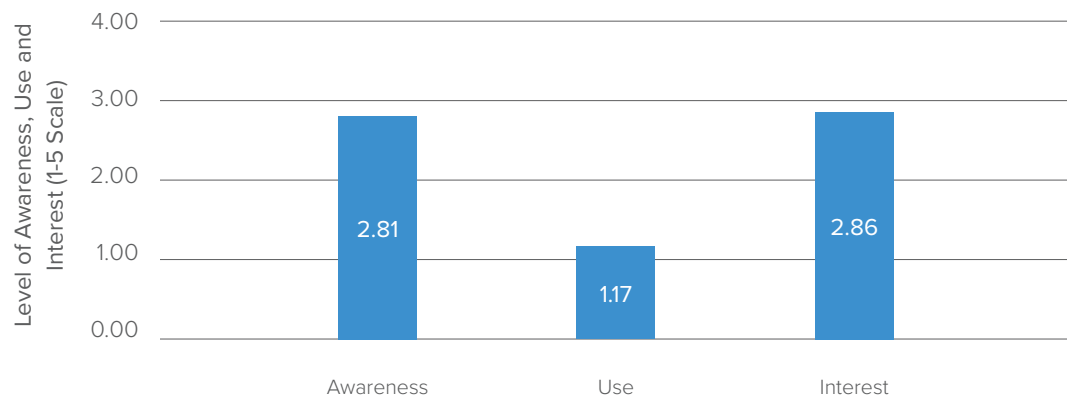
### CAREER DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE (INTERNSHIP)



### DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS



### OTHER APPRENTICESHIPS (Non-Registered and/or Youth Apprenticeships)







## REFERENCE

- <sup>1</sup> Nick Blumberg, “Why is Illinois Shrinking?,” WTTW, accessed, July 15, 2019, <https://news.wttw.com/2016/12/27/why-illinois-shrinking>.
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