



ILLINOIS
WORKFORCE
INNOVATION
BOARD

WIOA ANNUAL STATEWIDE

PERFORMANCE REPORT
NARRATIVE

PY2021



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Introduction

PY 2021 WIOA ANNUAL STATEWIDE PERFORMANCE REPORT NARRATIVE

Program Year 2021 was a year of self-assessment, planning and transformation that will result in a workforce system in Illinois designed to reducing barriers and put the customer at the center of the system. Much of the work done in PY21 will serve as the foundation for a new, reimagined state plan for 2024 that will support Illinois job-seekers and businesses thrive.

In September 2021 Governor JB Pritzker established the Illinois Workforce Equity and Access Commission. The Commission's Charge is to create a vision for an equitable, accessible, and effective future state workforce system grounded in an understanding of user and stakeholder experience, including how racial, social, and geographic inequities inform experience and outcomes across Illinois' federally and state-funded workforce programs.

Through stakeholder engagement and a rigorous examination of how the workforce system functions in Illinois, the commission began to develop recommendations around design enhancements and the governance structure and leadership needed to center the customer. The commission is slated to release a full report and recommendations in Program Year 2022.

Additionally, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board's (IWIB) Equity Task Force completed a two-year process of crafting recommendations to help create opportunities across the state for all citizens and remove barriers for economically disadvantaged populations. The recommendations also reflect the need to establish an equitable economic recovery for all Illinois residents, on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendations from both the governor's commission and the Equity Task Force will shape service access and delivery in the years to come.

Another landmark action taken during PY21 was the creation of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act. The law puts the state on a path toward 100 percent clean energy by establishing of the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program, which will provide supportive and financial assistance services to individuals participating in Clean Jobs Workforce Network program and Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program to overcome barriers to engaging and completing in workforce programs.

The forward-looking work was done in parallel with an on-going focus on service integration, service delivery and adaption to an economic and labor environment that continues to undergo a historic transformation.

SECTION 1

Progress made on Illinois Unified State Plan Strategies and Activities

Illinois modified its 2020 Unified State Plan during Program Year 2021. As part of the modification the state reviewed its strategies and activities for achieving the vision of a statewide workforce development system that supports the needs of individuals and businesses to ensure Illinois has a skilled workforce to effectively compete in the global economy. The workforce partners throughout the state agreed that the strategies and activities laid out in its 2020 were still relevant. They also agreed that as part of the lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, the state needed to further reduce barriers for individuals and businesses seeking workforce services. A new strategy was developed to meet emerging needs for supportive services to overcome barriers.

The following outlines the progress made during PY21 on the commitments the state made in its Unified State Plan.

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

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

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) continued to research and identify metrics that:

- determine whether the Unified State Plan and other WIOA requirements are being carried out effectively; and
- identify opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Illinois' workforce development system during PY21.

As part of the 2022 WIOA Unified State Plan modification process, the CIC mapped commitments and outcomes made in the plan to ensure activities were being addressed effectively.

Activity 1.2: Establish Regional Planning Areas

The state continued to recommend that Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) and Local Workforce Innovation Boards review the patterns in WIOA funding, participant service levels, and administrative costs to consider how each would impact service delivery and the ability to meet administrative requirements.

Activity 1.3: Conduct Integrated Regional Planning

Illinois went through the required state plan modification process during PY21. Much of the updates to the plan reflected the economic impact and continued recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The state assisted local areas and regions in their plan modification process to ensure an integrated and coordinated effort at all levels, including offering regional planning technical assistance to support regional planning and modification processes.

The WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team also continued to coordinate a Regional & Local Plan / One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding review process to ensure all 10 Economic Development Regions and all 22 LWIAs adopted their vision and commitments in response to the emerging economic conditions and required updates about how partners would coordinate around ways to ensure equity and access in all methods of service delivery.

Strategy 2: Support Employer-Driven Regional Sector Initiatives

Activity 2.1: Promote Employer-Driven Regional Sector Partnerships

A key charge given to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board Business Engagement Committee (BEC) was to help develop and support sector-based partnerships across the state. Sector-based partnerships are a mechanism through which businesses identify what is most critical to them and partner with public organizations (including the workforce system) to develop and implement solutions that deliver the greatest value. The BEC's Industry Partnerships Work Group was developed on this charge. Specifically, the work group seeks to create a network of sector-based champions and a community of practice for each target industry. The intent of this effort is to ensure the alignment of publicly funded workforce development investments and efforts with the workforce needs of critical industries across the state.

The approach is to ensure that a network of industry champions assists in outreach to business within targeted industries, respects existing industry leadership, leverages existing relationships and brings additional value to the champions and the businesses within their industry. As such, the work group sought to partner with Technology & Manufacturing Association (TMA) to pilot this approach, learn more about workforce needs directly from industry leaders, and ensure that sector partnership activities deliver a clear return on investment for businesses in the industry.

The work group asked TMA and its member companies to provide input and insights to shape the work moving forward. Work group members are charged with translating that feedback into actionable plans, which will be reviewed with TMA for validation and refinement. The work group developed an initial listing of components of a return on investment for organizations (beginning with TMA) that would act as sector champions.

Return on investments for Trade Associations/Sector Champions include:

- Expanding the association's awareness of statewide workforce initiatives.
- Providing the opportunity to broadcast and magnify the association's industry voice to influence state and local workforce system's services, processes, and policies.
- Adding value to association members by:
 - expanding the association's networking partnerships;
 - better communicating business services available through the state and local workforce system;
 - providing a more streamlined approach to utilizing these services for its members;
 - accessing additional traditional and non-traditional talent pools for its members; and
 - assisting the achievement of company inclusion and equity goals.
- Increasing brand awareness, and in-turn membership expansion.
- Seeking (or securing) potential funding for additional staff depending on the level of involvement and state funding available.
- Being part of a network of industry champions in which to validate and share best practices of the association with others throughout the state.

This pilot will result in an action plan for launching a statewide industry champion network to be presented to the IWIB and Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) for consideration. Program Year 2022 will see the creation of a draft list of responsibilities for future sector champions, partner entities, and the BEC. Additionally, there will be a finalization of responsibilities by roles and develop the implementation plan for doing the outreach.

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

In addition to the sector champion project discussed in Activity 1.1, the BEC also worked to develop an executive-level training deck to introduce a wider audience of business decision-makers to the concepts, uses and advantages of Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) sector strategies. The resources are designed to help executive level understanding the concepts of public private partnerships, sector partnership, and talent pipeline management. They need to have an understanding of how those concepts are operationalized for when their staff get involved in a local sector partnership or are engaged in a TPM process or collaborative. This led to creating a training aimed at business executives around sector strategies across the state. This project built upon previous work and provides focused information regarding TPM to help reach the workforce goal of effectively communicating and aiding sector strategies and to educating potential partners regarding sector strategies, including the TPM approach.

Additionally, through the BEC, the IWIB seeks to focus Illinois' workforce development system on the needs of businesses and their priorities on skills and education. The BEC has in turn found that a lack of uniform messaging between Illinois WIOA partners has led to low levels of engagement by the business community.

In response, the BEC gathered a diverse group of employers and workforce practitioners to develop a common message to business that will succinctly identify the advantages of utilizing Illinois' workforce partners. That message is:

We provide sustainable no-cost and low-cost strategies to recruit, hire, train and retain the skilled workforce businesses need to thrive.

This message was and will continue to be tested with employers. Initial reactions indicated that this message clearly and succinctly indicates the value that working with Illinois' workforce development system can bring to businesses.

Based on insights gained during PY21, the BEC intends to ask partners across the state and at all levels to implement this message as an entry point of their outreach materials to businesses. The "we" in this message applies to each of the workforce development partners and particularly to all partners working in concert to meet the needs of business.

Incumbent Worker Training Sector Analysis

Following a PY20 lull due to COVID-19, incumbent worker training (IWT) began a return to pre-pandemic levels in PY21. More than 260 companies in fourteen sectors engaged in IWT. These companies conducted over 300 projects and trained over 2,000 workers using over \$4,000,000 in IWT funds. See Table 1.

TABLE 1 PY21 IWT Activity by Sector - All Projects

Sector	Employers	% of Total	Projects	% of Total	Workers	% of Total	\$ Invested (Thousands)	% of Total
Manufacturing	174	65.9%	229	69.8%	1,588	76.3%	\$ 2,986.7	72.5%
Healthcare	22	8.3%	23	7.0%	118	5.7%	\$ 408.4	9.9%
Architecture and Construction	14	5.3%	20	6.1%	78	3.8%	\$ 122.4	3.0%
Transportation, Distribution and Logistics	12	4.5%	14	4.3%	50	2.4%	\$ 120.3	2.9%
Prof & Technical Serv	11	4.2%	11	3.4%	79	3.8%	\$ 144.2	3.5%
Hospitality and Tourism	7	2.7%	7	2.1%	46	2.2%	\$ 167.3	4.1%
Wholesale Trade	7	2.7%	7	2.1%	26	1.3%	\$ 37.7	0.9%
Utilities	7	2.7%	7	2.1%	13	0.6%	\$ 16.1	0.4%
Information Technology	4	1.5%	4	1.2%	14	0.7%	\$ 45.4	1.1%
Education and Training	2	0.8%	2	0.6%	2	0.1%	\$ 3.2	0.1%
Prof Organizations	1	0.4%	1	0.3%	39	1.9%	\$ 57.3	1.4%
Agriculture	1	0.4%	1	0.3%	21	1.0%	\$ 2.0	0.0%
Finance	1	0.4%	1	0.3%	3	0.1%	\$ 5.9	0.1%
Other Services	1	0.4%	1	0.3%	3	0.1%	\$ 0.5	0.0%
TOTAL	264	100.0%	328	100.0%	2,080	100.0%	\$ 4,117.4	100.0%

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

Activity 3.1: Promote Leading Career Pathway Models and Best Practices

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) promoted evidence-based and effective practices in career pathway implementation through all of its initiatives and grants. The ICCB fully adopted and utilized the Career Pathway Dictionary as the foundational resource for our programming, grants, etc. A main lever for career pathway development in adult education is through the development and implementation of bridge and integrated education and training programs. See Activity 3.2 for more information about work done on that item in PY2021.

The ICCB supported other initiatives, not funded by Title II but in close partnership with the core partners, that promoted career pathway development within Illinois' education and workforce system. These initiatives include:

- Perkins Program of Study Development: the development of Model Programs of Study Guides in crucial industry areas is part of the Illinois State Plan for Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. Program of Study Guides were developed in consultation and collaboration with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) through a process led and facilitated by Education Systems Center at NIU (EdSystems). The process involved extensive research into labor market information and credential programs, and dialogue across secondary, postsecondary, and employer stakeholders. The primary purposes and goals for the Model Programs of Study are to provide guidance and exemplars for local programs to adopt or customize as they develop programs of study for approval as part of the Perkins V Plan. Models have been developed for information technology, health sciences, education, and advanced manufacturing.

- **Innovative Transition and Bridge Program:** The ICCB provided approximately \$4 million in grant funding opportunities to be administered to support innovative bridge and transition programs and initiatives that support the seamless transition of students between education systems as well as employment. COVID-19 has disrupted education and employment opportunities for Illinoisans, disproportionately affecting racially minoritized communities and youth. Supporting and scaling effective and equitable education and career programming is essential for preparing targeted populations for post-pandemic recovery. The ICCB funded 33 grantees consisting of community colleges, community-based organizations, and school districts.
- **Customized Apprenticeship Programming in Information Technology:** Through the CAP-IT program (detailed in 3.4), the ICCB worked with participating colleges to create pre-apprenticeship programs for adult education programs operationalized through the integrated education and training model.

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

The ICCB continued to lead and support the development of work-based educational programs for the most vulnerable Illinois residents. Using key labor and market trends, the adult education programs worked to expand Illinois' talent pipeline and provide adult learners with opportunities to expand their academic, English language, and workplace skills. The evolving workforce created the need for the ICCB to develop and expand Integrated Education and Training (IET) and Bridge programs that accelerate and connect adult literacy instruction with technical or workforce training leading to industry-recognized/postsecondary credentials and meaningful employment.

PY21 saw growth in bridge programs in the following sectors: information technology and transportation, distribution, and logistics. Integrated education and training programs in PY21 saw growth in the health science sector.

The ICCB received approval from the U.S. Department of Education for its Ability to Benefit Alternative State Plan on May 15, 2022 developed during PY21. The ICCB submitted the Alternative State Plan in November 2021, after developing the plan over an 8-month period, engaging key stakeholders from adult education programs, community college leadership, financial aid, and other relevant partners. The purpose of Illinois' Ability to Benefit State-Defined Process is to increase access to federal financial aid for eligible adults without a high school diploma, who with proper support can be as successful as their peers in postsecondary credential and degree completion. Forty-four (44) of the 48 community colleges are approved to carry out activities under this plan.

Ability to Benefit (ATB), a provision of section 484(d) of the Higher Education Act (HEA), aids in equity of access to Federal Financial Aid for adult learners lacking a high school diploma. The ATB provision allows eligible adult learners who are participating in a career pathway program as amended in Public Law 114-113 under section 484(d)(2) of the HEA at a Title IV eligible institution to have access to financial aid. However, the two currently approved methods of ATB are underutilized due to the challenges they place on students. Thus, this alternative plan aims to overcome barriers to postsecondary attainment and scale ATB use.

Activity 3.3: Promote Innovative Career Pathway Solutions

The ICCB continues to support the Early School Leaver Transition Program (ESLTP) which is designed for out-of-school youth between the ages of 16 and 24. The program is specifically aimed at helping youth become reoriented and motivated to complete their education and engage in career and work training activities. In PY21, there were 8 ESLTP sites across Illinois. The work-based learning portion of the ESLTP included training in all 16 Career Clusters. The sites include Black Hawk College, John A. Logan College, Joliet Junior College, Lewis and Clark Com-

munity College, Malcolm X College- A City College of Chicago, Parkland College, Richland Community College, and Southwestern Illinois College.

The work-based learning component offered students the opportunity to gain work experiences while fine-tuning their employability skills. Most experiences were connected to employers who will likely employ the student upon completion of the ESLTP program.

Activity 3.4: Promote the Use of All Types of Apprenticeships

DCEO provides technical assistance to LWIAs and other grantees to integrate incumbent worker training with apprenticeships. In PY21, 98 companies used over \$1.2 million to conduct 104 IWT projects that incorporated some form of apprenticeship model. Of these, 42 companies used nearly \$615,000 in workforce funding to support 47 IWT projects providing Registered Apprenticeship training to 372 workers.

The ICCB continued the USDOL Customized Apprenticeship Programming in Information Technology, entering its third year at the close of PY21. The goals of this grant project are to:

- Expand existing industry-led customized apprenticeships through IT sector partnerships;
- Innovate new apprenticeship models for pilot and expansion;
- In partnership with Jobs for the Future, scale and expand apprenticeship model nationally.

By the end of PY21, the ICCB grant had served 593 participants with 91 hired as apprentices, putting it on track toward its goal of 1,728 participants, 842 apprentices hired, and 590 completers.

Strategy 4: Expand Service Integration

Activity 4.1: Provide Coordinated and Enhanced Career Services

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education provided sub-regulatory guidance related to the implementation and operation of the performance accountability system. Per the guidance, all participants in WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) programs are considered to be in an education program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment. The services classified as career services include 1) outreach, intake, and orientation, 2) referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, 3) provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of education, training, and workforce services by program and type of program, 4) provisions of information on availability of supportive services or assistance and appropriate referrals (including child care; child support; medical or child health, assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and CHIP; SNAP benefits; EITC; assistance under TANF, and other supportive services and transportation).

In the PY21 AEFLA Notice of Funding, digital literacy was identified as a priority service to integrate technology focused instruction to improve learning and the skills necessary for success of students. To support this priority, the Professional Development Network provided ongoing professional development for teachers and programs support staff, emphasizing strategies for digital inclusion, equity, and technology integration. This occurred through the delivery of virtual training, customized and program-specific professional development, online courses in the iLEARN system, and virtual learning communities.

Activity 4.2: Provide Coordinated and Enhanced Case Management Services

The ICCB Adult Education Professional Development Network (PDN) provided ongoing technical assistance and

training for all appropriate NRS assessments. The PDN remained informed of all national trends and test publisher guidelines. The professional development was delivered via online on-demand courses, virtual learning communities, and program-specific technical assistance. Trainings and resources were shared through an annually developed Professional Development Catalogue, the Excellence in Adult Education website, listservs, and social media channels. This robust system ensured all Adult Education staff had access to ongoing, relevant, and accurate training as it relates NRS assessments. Furthermore, the PDN provided training, technical assistance, and support to Title 1 staff members regarding TABE 11&12, CASAS GOALS, and CASAS Life & Work.

Activity 4.3: Promote Continuous Improvement and Ongoing Professional Development

The ICCB supported ample professional development opportunities for adult education providers in PY21 on the following topics:

- Expanding virtual instruction and student services
- Collaboration with core partners and other workforce stakeholders on career pathway implementation
- Recruitment and retention efforts
- Workplace literacy

At a statewide level, there were two professional development activities of note. The WIOA Summit offered both in person and virtual attendance options. Held in April, 2022, the summit provided a day and a half of dialogue and discussion on the state of the Illinois Workforce Development system. Presenters discussed innovations in apprenticeship, equity, and economic recovery.

Several cohorts of workforce practitioners also participated in a multi-week Human Centered Design professional development opportunity. The training was designed to provide new methods and processes for practitioners to learn how to put the customer in the center of service delivery models. The training emphasized the system from the perspective of our customers by exploring how to build a better relationships with customers, partners, and peers. It gave participants strategies to improve touchpoints with customers and partners to improve the customer experience and customer outcomes.

See Appendix 1 for more details on the number of individuals who took advantage of the professional development services offered for WIOA in Illinois.

Activity 4.4: Promote the Incorporation of Required Partner Services

During the year the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) continued its work on the National Governors Association (NGA) Workforce Innovation Network (WIN) grant. Illinois' NGA WIN proposal was to revamp its coordinated-veteran service delivery model and better serve high-risk veterans who are confronting significant barriers to employment. The State of Illinois focused on veterans because of the disproportionate barriers faced when entering and maintaining high-quality employment, including culture gaps between civilian society, challenges in connecting service members' skills and abilities to career opportunities, and a lack of coordination among Illinois' veteran programs.

The project was led by a cross-agency task force that included key staff from the Governor's Office, IDES, DCEO, ICCB, Illinois Department of Human Services (Department of Human Services and TANF/SNAP), Illinois Department of Central Management Services, and Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs. The team was guided by relevant demographic data (the NGA WIN Veterans Data Research Report) that highlighted the diversity of veteran

populations entering the local workforce and the barriers that they may face as jobseekers. To help fill gaps in quantitative data, the team organized and hosted the statewide Share Your Thoughts Veterans Focus Group Series in urban and rural regions to identify the current challenges veteran populations experience when interacting with employment services.

From both the qualitative and quantitative data analysis, it became clear that too many veterans are not finding their way to services of the JVSG program or other services in the WIOA ecosystem. Armed with this information and the shared commitment by state agencies that administer both core and required WIOA programs, IDES worked with a contract consultant (EDSI) to map a veteran's journey through the workforce system to identify specific "leakage" points. The work with EDSI resulted in: journey maps in multiple local workforce areas; a state-wide journey map for use in planning; and the development of a pilot referral-improvement project in one local area to serve as a model for statewide implementation. The pilot project is currently underway. In addition, IDVA quickly revised its referral process directly to the JVSG program, and the JVSG program manager started a series of trainings available for all frontline staff on the use of the Veterans Intake Form to improve referrals and reduce duplicative information collection.

Strategy 5: Promote Improved Data-Driven Decision Making

Activity 5.1: Improve Employer Tools for Communicating and Accessing Information

The IWIB BEC worked with DCEO and the Illinois workNet team to provide guidance and recommendations regarding the implementation of workNet's "BizHub" (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/bizhub/Pages/default.aspx>). BizHub is an employer-centric portal that seeks to provide quick access to information for employers across a wide range of topics such as hiring, recruiting and training, small business and entrepreneurship, business-related data, international trade, unemployment taxes and reporting. The BEC will continue to monitor the content, form and use of this portal to help ensure its utility and accessibility for employers.

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

The WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance Team convened a reopening subgroup to assist one-stop centers transition back to serving walk-in customers. A pilot of three American Job Centers was performed in April 2021 to identify any unknown issues of moving towards serving walk-in customers. The three local areas reported no issues during their pilot phase and the guidance outlining the process to amend reopening plans to accept walk-in customers was distributed to all local areas in May 2021. Guidance was distributed to local chief elected officials, Local Workforce Innovation Board chairpersons and staff, WIOA fiscal agents and grant recipients, WIOA program administrators, state agency partners and others (Appendix 2). The guidance outlined the need to amend American Job Centers reopening plans when changing how services are delivered in-person, changes to public office hours, changes to staffing levels and more.

The TA Team continued to monitor and provide technical support to local areas as they moved back to offering services to walk-in customers.

The TA Team and the newly reformed IWIB Service Integration Committee, team continued to explore ongoing training and support to front-line career services and case management staff to improve access and use of these tools and resources as part of the Workforce Academy.

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

The Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Policy Workgroup reconvened in March 2022 with the charge of responding to Department of Labor (DOL) monitoring findings and ensuring the policy addresses the relevant findings as they pertain to the ETPL. The DOL findings included:

- dissemination of the State ETPL, with accompanying performance and cost information, to the Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIBs);
- ensuring the maintenance of the State list of eligible training providers and programs;
- ensuring that programs meet eligibility criteria and performance levels established by the State; and
- verifying the accuracy of information provided.

The workgroup revisions within the revised ETPL Policy sought to improve equitable access to the ETPL with accompanying performance and cost information to enhance informed customer choice. The workgroup aims to create mechanisms within the policy to develop and maintain the ETPL and also to verify the information submitted by providers. The DOL also noted that Illinois did not have an established mechanism for Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) to be informed of their automatic eligibility to be included on the State ETPL. The ETPL Policy Workgroup will create this mechanism, further integrating the ETPL into the broader workforce system with the inclusion of RAPs. In addition to these prior findings, the DOL also found that in some cases, case managers did not present the entire State ETPL to participants so they could make informed choices when selecting both their training program and provider. To remedy these findings, the ETPL workgroup will seek to ensure the revised ETPL policy includes explicit instructions for case managers in relation to career planning so customers are truly able to access training leading to high-skill, in-demand, family sustaining wages.

In order to accomplish the charges above, the ETPL Policy Workgroup started meeting once a month during PY21 to revise the current ETPL policy. Stakeholders from across the workforce and education systems were chosen to ensure the policy successfully integrates entities and perspectives throughout the state. Going forward, the workgroup will also create recommendations regarding the implementation of the ETPL policy to ensure the Local Workforce Innovation Boards, career centers and planners, and customers have access to the information needed to utilize and access the ETPL. Further, the workgroup staff will collaborate with the IWIB's Continuous Improvement Committee, Equity Task Force, and the Illinois Workforce Partnership to ensure that the policy is meeting the needs of customers facing a broad range of barriers to employment and to ensure further integration of the workforce system in Illinois.

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

The 'Unemployment-to-Reemployment' Portal was released to the local areas in Spring, 2022. This data visualization informs local decision makers on the impact of unemployment spell duration on reemployment probability by education levels. The equity lens for this approach takes advantage of the rich demographic characteristics of claimants; e.g., low wage workers, race, ethnicity, gender and geography.

The labor market economists at IDES released several data visualizations that enable our workforce partners to better understand the market dynamics for the coming decade in terms of growth of industries in Illinois, as well as demand for certain occupations/workers. The Tableau-based visual allows users to view data at the state-levels, as well as drilling down into the economic development regions.

Strategy 6: Advance Public-Private Data Infrastructure***Activity 6.1: Enhance the State Labor Market Information System***

IDES and its partners have continued its interagency grant activity under the U.S. DOL/ETA Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) that links WIOA Title I and Title III program participants to WIOA program performance quarterly measures, stable job quarterly measures, and monthly employment measures. The project team has developed a dashboard for senior agency management and local program administrators to report outcomes by longitudinal cohort, demographics and local geographies.

Activity 6.2: Expand and Improve the State Longitudinal Data System

HS2Careers and College2Careers web-based applications were launched in 2021 and subsequently expanded to mobile-based formats to engage a wider audience, and additional data streams were integrated. These two products are a result of a multi-agency effort of workforce and education partners to cross-match decades-long IDES employment/earnings with training/student records and augment the discussion on completers and graduates with longitudinal outcomes, such as multiple jobholding, job stability, career earnings and career job profiles.

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

The Illinois Data Team's work with core partners and the Illinois Chief Information Officer, as well as the Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) to improve the integration of program and case management systems was put on hold as the Governor's Commission on Workforce Equity and Access developed recommendations around improving data sharing and information systems. Once those recommendations are made, the Illinois Data Team will assist in carrying them out.

Strategy 7: Increase Barrier Reduction Services***Activity 7.1: Leverage barrier reduction resources and WIOA supportive services to increase equitable access to training and employment***

This strategy was added during PY21 as part of the WIOA Unified State Plan modification process. Despite its newness, the state made great progress on braiding WIOA supportive services, state funding and other resources to ensure programs are accessible and equitable for all. Examples of barrier reduction services being incorporated into workforce programs include:

- Illinois set aside \$50 million in American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 funds to address the economic impact experienced by employers and individuals either under-employed, unemployed, or facing one or more barriers to employment. These funds were invested to retool the Job Training and Economic Development Program (JTED) that had been previously eliminated due to funding cuts. A significant component to the revamped program is a flexible pool of funds (barrier reduction funds) to help increase family stability and job retention by covering accumulated emergency costs for basic needs, such as housing-related expenses (rent, utilities, etc.), transportation, child care, digital technology needs, education needs, mental health services, substance abuse services, income support, and work-related supplies that are not typically covered by programmatic supportive services.
- The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act was signed by Gov. JB Pritzker in PY21. The law puts the state on a path toward 100 percent clean energy by establishing of the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program, which

will provide supportive and financial assistance services to individuals participating in Clean Jobs Workforce Network program and Climate Works Preapprenticeship Program to overcome barriers to engaging and completing in workforce programs.

- The Governor's Healthcare Workforce Initiative directs the Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) to reinvest \$180 million to preserve and grow the healthcare workforce, with a focus on Medicaid providers and providers in underserved areas of the State, including rural areas. This significant infusion of revenue will provide funding for staff bonuses, continuing education trainings for providers and other vital investments in staff retention and recruitment that result in expanded healthcare access. Funding will be available to a broad range of healthcare providers, including hospitals, clinics, behavioral health providers, home health workers and more. This new workforce initiative is in addition to the almost \$1 billion the State has invested through appropriations to healthcare providers from federal COVID-19 response and recovery funds. It is also in addition to the significant investment that was made in safety net hospitals through over \$80 million in new funding beginning in fiscal year 2020 and approximately \$800 million provided through rate increases to medical providers such as hospitals, nursing homes, physicians and other providers in the last two years.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

STATE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

The Southern Illinois University (SIU) team developed a Customer Feedback Survey via SurveyMonkey. The purpose of the Customer Feedback Survey is to assess customers' overall satisfaction with the Illinois workNet web portal and the resources and tools offered to help individuals and partners meet their employment and training goals. The feedback survey is available to all users, linked in the footer of the Illinois workNet website. The feedback collected via the survey is used to inform function and content available across the Illinois workNet portal as approved by the appropriate DCEO program leads. Users rated Illinois workNet 4 out of 5 stars with 79% of respondents being likely or very likely to refer Illinois workNet to friends or colleagues. The top three reasons users visited Illinois workNet was for:

- Finding Job Openings
- Exploring Career Options
- Finding Training & Education Opportunities

Feedback received during PY21 focused on additional content that users felt would assist them in reaching their employment and training goals. Examples include having more information on the WIOA application process, better visibility of quick start guides and their information for users, and more ways to search employer booth information.

Governor's Commission on Workforce Equity and Access and the IWIB Equity Task Force

PY21 saw the conclusion of two parallel efforts to identify equity and access issues around the state's workforce system and suggest improvements to correct the issues.

Governor J.B. Pritzker created the Governor's Commission on Workforce Equity and Access in September 2021. The commission was charged with recommending how to create an equitable, accessible, and effective workforce for all. The work of the commission was grounded in the user and stakeholder experience.

The commission set up a user-stakeholder experience working group to focus on recommending human-centered design improvements, especially relating to equity and the needs of workers and vulnerable youth.

Focus groups included job seekers that had exited their workforce programing as well as employers who have interacted with the system. Feedback around the workforce system from these interactions will be used to develop the final recommendations of the Commission, which are due in Program Year 2022. The recommendations will center around developing a position within the Governor's office specifically to head and coordinate the workforce efforts as well as a reconstituting of the state's workforce board. Meeting summaries from the commission and the final report once completed can be found at <https://cwea.illinois.gov/>.

The other statewide effort that paralleled and intertwined with the Governor's commission was the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board's Equity Task Force, which was charged in October 2020 to create recommendations to ensure all workforce customers were put on a pathway to success.

The task force examined workforce data to identify gaps in service delivery and to develop recommendations around closing those gaps.

Additionally, the task force was provided the information and feedback gathered from the Governor's Commission.

The task force issued its report and recommendations in May 2022. It is available at <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Pages/IWIB-Resources.aspx>.

Recommendations from the task force include building a culture of equity in the workforce system, investing in data systems to identify disparities and contributing factors to disparities, and prioritizing supportive services that complement workforce services for participants.

While the task force's work is complete, the IWIB is investigating creating a standing equity committee to support and monitor the implementation of the task force's recommendations.

SECTION 2 PROMISING PRACTICES

Equity and Access

Illinois is committed to applying an equity lens to its workforce investment strategies to help ensure that our most vulnerable populations gain skills and access good, family-supporting jobs. Key to that work is identifying inequitable outputs and outcomes in the workforce system, exploring the cause of those inequities, and implementing solutions to advance equity within the system. The IWIB's Equity Task Force recommendations issued PY21 will continue to guide policy and operations in Program Year 2022 and beyond.

The Governor's Commission on Workforce Equity & Access planted seeds for continued priorities around addressing racial, social, geographic and economic disparities to expand access and promote equity and inclusion in all industries. These seeds will be explored over the next two years and will inform the 2024 state workforce plan.

SECTION 3

APPROACHES ILLINOIS CHOSE FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS PERFORMANCE INDICATOR PILOT.



Effectiveness in Serving Employers (ESE) began as a pilot program in PY16 and PY17. States were required to collect information on two of the three indicators or develop their own indicator. The two indicators chosen by Illinois were 1) Employer Penetration Rate and 2) Retention with the Same Employer. Illinois did not change their choice of DOL ESE pilot measurements, or add any other metrics for performance goal measurement, for PY21. These performance goals (not yet defined by DOL and the U.S. Department of Education) are to be based on indicators identified in WIOA Section 116 (b)(2)(a)(4). Baseline data continued to be reviewed to assist in determining potential performance goal selection moving forward. In PY21, Illinois achieved a 63 percent retention rate with the same employer in the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit for nearly 23,212 participants. During the same period, the penetration rate for more than 397,311 businesses was 3.1 percent. Additional information on Illinois' success with the two pilot approaches is included in Appendix 3.

Evaluations

Early in PY21 representatives from all four titles of WIOA participated in a U.S. DOL evaluation learning community to ensure Illinois had an evaluation process that met WIOA requirements. Building on this experience, the IWIB's CIC tasked the evaluation workgroup to create an evaluation toolkit that was widely available, relevant, and applicable for the workforce system at the state and local level. Using the 2020 U.S. DOL evaluation toolkit Key Elements for State Workforce Agencies and incorporating a focus on equity, the outcome is an online, accessible, and interactive evaluation toolkit which includes guidance on how to:

- complete a rigorous evaluation;
- review policies and processes across the workforce, education and economic development systems;
- analyze evaluation results to determine if results conform to intended outcomes leading to continuous improvement at the local level; and
- ensure processes remain consistent and valid across the system and lead to organizational and management change.

The evaluation framework consists of an introduction to the framework and an overview of equity, an introduction to evaluation and an evaluation checklist, logic models, evaluation planning, selecting an evaluator, implementing evaluation, requests for data and information, and a glossary and acronym list. The toolkit also includes embedded professional development webinars focusing on WIOA system requirements, equity, and evaluation that supports the content of the toolkit.

Research staff from Northern Illinois University piloted use of the evaluation toolkit to evaluate the Apprenticeship Navigator Grant Program, using the Evaluation Checklist included in the Framework to guide evaluation. After the pilot, the Evaluation Toolkit was presented to the IWIB's Continuous Improvement Committee and then presented at the annual statewide WIOA Summit in April 2022. After each presentation, feedback from participants was solicited and incorporated into the final Evaluation Toolkit.

The evaluation workgroup continues to meet quarterly to discuss potential updates to the toolkit, ensuring it remains relevant and meaningful, and to discuss strategies to disseminate this toolkit to local level workforce system staff.

The Evaluation Toolkit can be found here: <https://ilworkforceacademy.com/evaluation-toolkit/>.

Performance Accountability System

Performance and Transparency Dashboard

In April 2021, the DCEO launched a public WIOA All Title Performance & Transparency webpage per the request of the IWIB's CIC. DCEO worked with performance Subject Matter Experts from DCEO (WIOA Title I), ICCB (WIOA Title II), IDES (WIOA Title III), and IDHS (WIOA Title IV) to collaborate on the content and gather the necessary performance data. The webpage highlights all four WIOA titles, their performance measures, federal reporting agencies, and past and current aggregate annual performance data in a variety of interactive tables and graphs. The public page was reviewed by the equity committee and bureau of blind services to ensure the page met diversity and accessibility standards. A second round of updates was made to the WIOA All Title Performance & Transparency webpage in April 2022 to include quarterly performance data in addition to the annual metrics. Additionally, a new data graph highlighting enrollment and demographic data was added. The updated performance page was highlighted at the WIOA Summit as part of a joint Performance session hosted by Subject Matter Experts from all four WIOA titles.

In addition to the information available about WIOA, the dashboard provides visitors the ability to look at each performance indicator by program year and by each title through a user-friendly interface and visual. The dashboard provides an option to look at information isolated to a single program year through a Snapshot View or to look at performance across multiple program years by each title through a Timeline View. In each view the user can hover over a visual to see data related to the target goal, performance, and status of meeting the measure by title. The dashboard also allows the underlying data to be exported into a spreadsheet so users can have access to the data for further analysis if desired.

The Performance Workgroup continues to work closely with the CIC to explore ways to maximize the use of the new resource and address performance-related questions from the committee and larger IWIB.

Illinois Performance Accountability and Transparency Page (IPATS)

DCEO worked with Southern Illinois university (SIU) to launch the first iteration of the Illinois Performance Accountability and Transparency System (IPATS) in January of 2021. IPATS was created as a universal platform where data extracted from existing WIOA systems could be uploaded and interacted with through graphics, lists, and maps to monitor and access existing performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements. IPATS displays data in both macro and micro levels to access the state and local areas' effectiveness in achieving positive outcomes from individuals served by the local workforce development areas. It aggregates and has comparison data for local areas. It tracks participant activity based on customer service activity tracked to Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) performance measures. A participant tracking dashboard provides a high-level overview filterable at the State or local level or by career planner with the ability to drill down to participant-level data and export the data and information contained within for tracking and maintenance of participant files. It tracks participant activity based on customer service activity tracked to Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) performance measures. The system was initially developed for the Title I Adult, Dislocated

Worker, and Youth programs, but has the flexibility and integration capacity to utilize the WIOA six core programs, as well as other required partners such as the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. Throughout PY21 IPATS was expanded with usability enhancements and to include Dashboards for Apprenticeship IL and Youth Career Pathways. In the years ahead it will be further expanded to include additional performance displays for Apprenticeship Illinois and other special program data. In May 2022 a virtual statewide training was provided with over 120 participants attending. The webinar highlighted using the Illinois Performance Accountability & Transparency System (IPATS) for Performance and Case Management and Program Implementation

SECTION 4 WAIVERS

WAIVER #1 REDUCE OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH EXPENDITURE RATE FROM 75% TO 50%

Waiver associated with the requirement at the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410 that the State and local areas expend seventy-five (75) percent of the Governor's reserve youth funds and local formula youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY) and calculation of the local area expenditure for each local area.

Intent of Waiver

Illinois' current efforts for aligning education, workforce, and economic development are laying a solid foundation for promoting leading career pathway models and best practices. Career pathway development in Illinois is being expanded to encompass every level of the education system as well as across the needs of our diverse populations including those that face multiple barriers to achieving self-sufficiency.

Of importance to the Governor's vision, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) Strategic Plan, and the Unified State Plan is the expansion of career pathway systems into the secondary system for opportunity youth. This waiver will allow Illinois to provide youth with barriers the necessary support to successfully equip them with the academic and technical skills necessary to improve their employability. Furthermore, Illinois anticipates that this waiver will provide greater opportunity for blending funds at the federal, state, and local levels across the partners to increase innovative strategies for improving career pathway opportunities for youth.

Goals and Performance Outcomes from Waiver Request

As a result of this waiver, Illinois expects that:

- The number of in-school youth (ISY) served will increase; and
- Performance accountability outcomes for overall WIOA Youth (including both in- and out-of-school youth) will remain steady or increase for the majority of the WIOA Youth performance indicators.

*Note at this time, the effects of the pandemic on registrant numbers and performance have yet to be realized; therefore, the projected outcomes listed above may not be achieved.

DOL Approval Letter

The United States Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) approves for Program Year (PY) 2022 and PY 2023, which includes the entire time period for which states are authorized to spend those

funds, the State's request to waive the requirement that the State expend seventy-five (75) percent of Governor's reserve youth funds on OSY. ETA reviewed the State's waiver request and plan and has determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of Illinois to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system. Illinois may lower the expenditure requirement of Governor's reserve funds to fifty (50) percent for OSY.

In addition, ETA approves for PY 2022 and PY 2023, which includes the entire time period for which states are authorized to spend those funds, the State's request to waive the requirement that local areas expend seventy-five (75) percent of local youth formula funds on OSY. Illinois may lower the local youth funds expenditure requirement to fifty (50) percent for OSY. As a result of this waiver, ETA expects that the number of in-school youth (ISY) served will increase, and performance accountability outcomes for overall WIOA Youth (including both ISY and OSY) will remain steady or increase for the majority of the WIOA Youth performance indicators. The State is also approved to calculate the lowered fifty (50) percent expenditure rate at the State level instead of individually for each local area.

Progress Toward Achieving the Goals and Performance Outcomes

Under this waiver authority, the state has seen an increase in the number of in-school youth (ISY) served every program year; however, out-of-school youth served decreased during the same timeframe.

	In-School Youth (ISY)	Out-of-School Youth (OSY)
PY 2019	1,030	5,708
PY 2020	1,123	5,380
PY 2021	1,284	5,354

Performance accountability outcomes for overall WIOA Youth (including both ISY and OSY) slightly decreased in PY 2020, which is the latest year performance outcomes are available, is a direct result of the lower OSY served due to the Illinois workNet centers and program service providers being closed during the COVID pandemic. The majority of the WIOA Youth performance indicators are on track to either remain steady or increase for PY21.

Program Year	No. Served	Employment/ Education Rate 2 nd Quarter	Employment/ Education Rate 4 th Quarter	Median Earnings	Credential Rate	Measurable Skill Gains
PY 2018	7,923	74.13%	71.05%	\$3,600.00	68.30%	46.18%
PY 2019	6,738	73.43%	73.07%	\$3,715.41	70.59%	44.25%
PY 2020	6,503	71.79%	67.78%	\$4,234.28	69.88%	52.18%
PY21 YTD	6,638	73.66%	69.27%	\$4,668.31	70.86%	51.96%

WAIVER #2 PROVIDING ITAS TO WIOA IN-SCHOOL YOUTH

Waiver of 20 CFR 681.550 to allow individual training accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY).

Intent of Waiver

The request is made to permit Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIBs) to use the state's list of eligible training providers to secure training for all youth including the ISY who are preparing to graduate and extend their educational goals into post-secondary opportunities. The waiver is designed to increase program flexibility, enhance informed customer choice, allow all youth to benefit from services provided by Illinois' certified training providers,

and expand training options without requiring Illinois workNet (One-Stop) operators to register ISY participants eighteen (18) years old or older in the adult program. Funds used for ITAs would be tracked separately for each funding stream.

Using ITAs also allows youth service providers an opportunity to promote and encourage training as another option to entering an increasingly tough labor market. Approval of this waiver would allow youth to select approved training programs from Illinois' list of demand occupation training programs.

Goals and Performance Outcomes from Waiver Request

As a result of this waiver, Illinois expects that:

- Increase in the number of local workforce innovation areas that offer ITAs to in-school youth.
- Increase in the number of youth that utilizes an ITA to receive an industry-recognized and/or some other post-secondary credential.
- Increase in performance accountability measures for youth as found in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA (e.g., increases in credential attainment and measurable skills gains).

DOL Approval Letter

United States Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) approves, for PY 2022 and 2023, the State's request to waive the requirement limiting ITAs to only out-of-school youth (OSY), ages 16–24. In addition to these out-of-school youth (OSY), the State may use ITAs for ISY, ages 16–21. ETA reviewed the State's waiver request and plan and has determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of Illinois to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system. Approval of this waiver should not impede the State's efforts to prioritize OSY, including outreach to the OSY population.

Progress Toward Achieving the Goals and Performance Outcomes

- Through PY21, sixteen (16) of the state's twenty-two (22) local workforce innovation areas, spread across eight (8) of the ten (10) Economic Development Regions, have ISY into ITAs, indicating a broad geographic use of the waiver.
- The number of ISY enrolled in ITAs has increased over 12% since the inception of the waiver. For PY 2020, which is the latest year performance outcomes are available, ISY that received an ITA have successfully exited the program with the following characteristics:
 - a. Measurable Skill Gains: 36
 - b. Completed Training: 31
 - c. Earned Industry-Recognized Credential: 34
 - d. Entered employment: 25

WAIVER #3 AMEND THE DEFINITION OF INCUMBENT WORKER BY ELIMINATING OR REDUCING THE SIX-MONTH EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENT

Waiver of 20 CFR 680.780 to adjust the six-month employment requirement for incumbent worker training (IWT).

Intent of Waiver

The request is made to eliminate an arbitrary barrier to providing incumbent worker training to companies and workers struggling to stay competitive. Removing this barrier aligns directly with priorities espoused by the Department of Labor, the Governor's Executive Order #3, the Five-Year Economic Development Plan and WIOA Unified State Plan to:

- Be more responsive to the needs of businesses;
- Support establishing long-term relationships between businesses and the workforce system;
- Promote the expansion of Registered Apprenticeships to more businesses as a means to meet their workforce needs;
- Provide upward mobility for workers into career pathways; and
- Promote increased use of work-based learning that allows workers to learn and earn at the same time.

Goals and Performance Outcomes from Waiver Request

As a result of this waiver, Illinois expects that:

1. Increase in the number of local workforce innovation area incumbent worker training projects;
2. Increase in number of businesses utilizing incumbent worker training; and
3. Increase the number of incumbent workers able to receive training.

DOL Approval Letter

ETA approves, through June 30, 2024, the State's request to adjust the six-month employment requirement for the purposes of conducting IWT. ETA reviewed the State's waiver request and plan and has determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of Illinois to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system. The following conditions apply to implementation of this waiver:

1. IWT may only be used to provide an employee skills to advance in their job or get skills to stay in a job (layoff aversion);
2. Report individual records based on the Participant Individual Record Layout for all IWT participants through the Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS); and
3. Track employment retention and earnings outcomes to measure whether use of this waiver has a positive effect.

Progress Toward Achieving the Goals and Performance Outcomes

From program year (PY) 2020 to PY 2021 Illinois has seen the number of local workforce innovation area incumbent worker training projects increase from thirty-three (33) to sixty-four (64), the number of businesses utilizing incumbent worker training increased from thirty-one (31) to sixty-two (62), and an increase in the number of incumbent workers able to receive training from seventy-two (72) to one-hundred twenty-five (125).

WAIVER #4 PLANNING REGION ALIGNMENT

The State of Illinois is seeking a waiver from the following Section(s):

WIOA Sec. 106(a)(2) and 20 CFR § 679.210 (preamble)

"In accordance with WIOA Section 106(a)(2), a single local area may not be split across two planning regions. Local areas must be contiguous to be a planning region and effectively align economic and workforce development activities and resources."

Intent of Waiver

This waiver will provide Illinois with the flexibility to remove a regulatory barrier for counties that have demonstrated the ability to plan and deliver services in the context of the current local workforce area and regional planning area boundaries.

The intent of the waiver is to not impose an unviable mandate on local Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) and workforce boards not able to restructure their county alignment at this time.

Goals and Performance Outcomes from Waiver Request

The projected outcome of the waiver is to avoid creating a dysfunctional and disorganized environment that ultimately would have a negative impact on service delivery and customer outcomes if realignment were forced on local Chief Elected Officials (CEOs).

DOL Approval Letter

The State's request to waive the requirement that a planning region consist of one local workforce development area, two or more intrastate local areas, or two or more interstate local areas is approved through June 30, 2024. This waiver allows the State to assign a single local workforce development area to more than one planning region. In its WIOA state Plan and waiver request, Illinois identified regions in the state that correspond with its economy, the labor market, and other factors. However, the existing geography of designated local workforce development areas span multiple regions. The State and local workforce areas indicate local areas have experienced success in planning and delivering services in the context of the State's identified regions in their early efforts. ETA reviewed the State's waiver request and plan and determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of Illinois to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system.

Progress Toward Achieving the Goals and Performance Outcomes

To date the burden of contributing to multiple regional plans has not risen to the level of the locally perceived burden of realignment. As mentioned previously, Illinois successfully brokered realignment of several counties during the current planning cycle. Our position is to continue to encourage local areas to consider realignment and offer technical assistance to implement but stopping short of imposing this requirement on local CEOs determined to maintain the status quo.

The local areas that were allowed not to realign have continued to effectively plan and deliver services while maintaining fiscal sustainability and performance accountability under the current local workforce area and regional planning boundaries.

WAIVER #5 INCREASE ON-THE-JOB TRAINING REIMBURSEMENT

The State is requesting a waiver of WIOA Section 134(c) (3)(H)(i) and 20 CFR 680.720(b) in order to increase on-the-job training (OJT) employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees.

Intent of Waiver

Illinois currently has the authority under WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)() to provide reimbursements to employers of on-the-job training programs up to 75 percent, and is seeking expansion of the authority to the current allowable employer reimbursement for the wage rate of an On-the-Job Training (OJT) participant for the extraordinary costs of providing training and additional supervision related to the OJT as described in WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) and further outlined at 20 CFR 680.720 (b).

Illinois is proposing a sliding reimbursement scale to the employer based on its size and capability. Under this waiver, employers with fifty (50) or less employees would be reimbursed up to ninety percent (90%), those with between 51 and 250 employees up to seventy-five (75%) reimbursement and all other employers up to the stat-

utory limit of 50%. Further, Illinois will develop policy as documentation of the factors used when deciding to increase the wage reimbursement level above 50 percent (50%) as required under WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i)(I) and 680.730.

This waiver is being requested to apply for all OJT contracts supported by WIOA formula funds, including Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, as appropriate.

Many small businesses are facing unprecedented demands to keep their doors open and avoid layoffs. Extra incentives such as the increased wage reimbursement is a tool to support a strengthened recovery strategy. Illinois needs to have the flexibility to provide an increased incentive to establish new on-the-job training opportunities during a time of uncertainty and recovery.

Goals and Performance Outcomes from Waiver Request

The state estimates that the waiver will improve outcomes and provide other tangible benefits in the following ways:

- Increase in the number of OJT placements;
- Increase in the number of OJT placements in targeted sectors and occupations;
- Increase in the employment retention rates in the OJT-related industry 2nd and 4th quarter following exit; and
- Increase in the number of unique employer work sites using OJT.

DOL Approval Letter

ETA approves the State's waiver request through June 20, 2024, for the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula funds. ETA reviewed the State's waiver request and plan and has determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of Illinois to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system. Existing statutory authority permits the State and its local workforce areas to increase the reimbursement rate for OJT contracts up to 75 percent. The State may also reimburse up to 90 percent for OJT for businesses with 50 or fewer employees. ETA expects the utilization of OJT to increase in the State as a result of this waiver.

Progress Toward Achieving the Goals and Performance Outcomes

As a result of this waiver, the number of OJT placements (including those in apprenticeships) and the number of unique OJT employer worksites has steadily increased each program year. Additionally, the overwhelming majority of the OJT placements have been in the manufacturing sector.

	OJT Placements	Unique OJT Work Sites	OJT Participants w/ Training Related Job at Exit
PY 2019	343	134	320
PY 2020	353	162	232
PY 2021 YTD	424	162	170

For PY 2020, which is the latest year performance outcomes are available, employment retention rates for OJT participants that exited with a job in a related industry in which they were trained in the second (2nd) and fourth (4th) quarters following exit has decreased. This may be a direct result of the shuttering of employers in the manufacturing industry during the COVID pandemic.

WAIVER #6 INCREASE IN TRANSITIONAL JOBS EXPENDITURE THRESHOLD

Waiver of WIOA Section 134(d)(5) and 20 CFR 680.195 to allow up to 20 percent of WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker local formula funds (Act and Final Rules allows up to 10 percent) to be used for the provision of transitional jobs.

Intent of Waiver

Transitional Jobs are an important employment strategy best used when there is higher than normal unemployment or during an economic shock, such as COVID-19, especially for hardest-hit chronically unemployed individuals. Transitional Jobs can provide employment, earned income, and connections to future unsubsidized employment to help stabilize individuals and families. Increasing the allowable amount local areas can allocate toward transitional jobs will support these efforts and offer maximum local flexibility to meet locally determined demand for using transitional jobs as an employment strategy.

This waiver would contribute to the economic recovery and provide an essential avenue for participants that are traditionally long-term unemployed or underemployed with the support they need to secure employment.

Goals and Performance Outcomes from Waiver Request

The state estimates that the waiver will improve outcomes and provide other tangible benefits for jobseekers and employers in the following ways:

- Increase in number of employers that use transitional jobs as a tool to find skilled workers.
- Increase in number of participants using transitional jobs program as tool to gain employment and address barriers to employment.
- Increase in the number of local workforce innovation boards using transitional jobs as a strategy to serve Adults with barriers to employment.
- Increase in reported costs for transitional jobs.

DOL Approval Letter

ETA approves the State's waiver request through June 30, 2024, for the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker formula funding streams. ETA reviewed the State's waiver request and plan and has determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of Illinois to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system. To accurately report participants in receipt of transitional jobs, Illinois must record code value "6" in Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) element 1205 "Work Experience," and code value "1" in PIRL element 1211.

Progress Toward Achieving the Goals and Performance Outcomes

In PY21, one (1) local workforce innovation area provided transitional job services to thirty-eight (38) participants through three (3) employers.

WAIVER #7 USE OF STATEWIDE FUNDS FOR QUALIFYING EVENTS

The State of Illinois is requesting from the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) a waiver to allow flexibility in the use of the funds reserved by the Governor for use to provide statewide rapid response activities (i.e. WIOA section 134(a)(2)(A)), and for use to provide statewide employment and training activities (i.e. WIOA section 134(a)(2)(B) and (3)) in order to provide comprehensive Disaster Recovery assistance to affected areas as described in WIOA 170(d) and 20 CFR 687.100(b).

Intent of Waiver

Illinois's WIOA Unified State Plan articulates many of the WIOA-related statewide activities it does, or can do, when facing a qualifying event. For example, the Office of Employment and Training is responsible for applying and administering applicable National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG), consistent with WIOA Sec. 170 and its corresponding regulatory requirements. These grants are helpful once allocated, but in the time between the event and allocation, aid is urgently needed and there is much work to be done. If months pass before the NDWG allocation occurs, damage can be exacerbated, and work is not completed. The state is mindful of this time gap and strives to apply as soon as the state is eligible for NDWG funding assistance, as appropriate. The efficient use of time right after a qualifying event occurs is a critical variable in how well recovery is measured.

This waiver will allow the State of Illinois' to efficiently and effectively respond to disasters by aligning the program requirements of a disaster recovery project regardless if they are funded with WIOA Statewide Rapid Response funds or the National Dislocated Worker Grant Program.

Under this waiver the state will have the ability to expeditiously allocate funds to a local workforce innovation board, or local board, so they may respond quickly to a disaster, emergency, or other qualifying event as described at 20 CFR 687.100(b). Only those events, and cascading events caused by a qualifying event, that have been declared as an emergency or disaster by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), by the chief official of a Federal Agency with jurisdiction over the Federal response to a disaster with potential significant loss of employment, or the Governor of Illinois qualify for the use of WIOA statewide funds.

Goals and Performance Outcomes from Waiver Request

The state estimates that the waiver will improve outcomes and provide other tangible benefits in the following ways:

- Increase statewide and local area workforce development response times to a qualifying event;
- Increase public safety and help support humanitarian activities;
- Availability of disaster relief employment will provide grant participants with access to employment and training activities;
- Increasing of eligible grant participant's employment and training activities will lead towards a higher probability of securing unsubsidized employment; and
- Alleviation of some of the time-sensitive variables arising from a qualifying event affecting an employer and lessening the severity of possible layoffs or business closings.

DOL Approval Letter

ETA approves, through June 30, 2024, the State's request to use statewide funds for disaster-relief employment, as described in WIOA Section 170(d) and 20 CFR 687.100(b).

ETA reviewed the State's waiver request and plan and has determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of Illinois to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system. Therefore, ETA approves this waiver under the following conditions:

1. The Governor, or any federal agency, declares an emergency in the local area (or areas) where the State wishes to use statewide funds for the purpose of public service employment;
2. WIOA-funded public service employment opportunities are short-term in nature;

3. WIOA-funded public service employment opportunities increase the likelihood of participants entering unsubsidized employment; and
4. The State collects and tracks use of funds under this waiver and complies with all WIOA- required performance and fiscal reporting.

Progress Toward Achieving the Goals and Performance Outcomes

The Rapid Response disaster and emergency waiver has allowed the State and local areas to respond to disasters using readily available State Rapid Response funds and assist laid off workers with obtaining temporary disaster recovery employment as well as permanent employment. Since receiving this waiver, three local workforce innovation boards have received an award and provided disaster recovery employment to twenty-two participants at five disaster worksites.

APPENDIX

WIOA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2021



APPENDIX 1

WIOA Professional Development Activities for Program Year 2021

ICSPS leads the WIOA Professional Development Committee to facilitate and support the Wednesday Webinar series which began in fall 2019. Direction and selection of topics for the webinars are determined by evaluations from previous events and guided by the WIOA Professional Development Committee.

Every Monday an announcement is shared with the WIOA system (800+ participants) on upcoming WIOA Professional Development. All webinars are recorded and shared with registrants. All recordings from this quarter can be viewed at <https://ilworkforceacademy.com/workforce-webinars/> In addition, all webinars are archived on Illinois workNet at <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Pages/Archived-Training.aspx>. The evaluations from each of the webinars are reviewed quarterly by the WIOA Professional Development Committee to ensure the needs of the system are being met.

Information on upcoming webinars can be found at <https://ilworkforceacademy.com/workforce-webinars/> This fiscal year the following webinars were developed/coordinated, presented, and supported by ICSPS.

- Demand Occupation Training List and Associated Career Planning
July 14, 2021 – 208 attendees
- Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers, Foreign Labor, and the Agricultural Recruitment System – July 21, 2021
– 67 attendees
- Resume to Interviewing – 6 Steps to Getting the Job – August 4, 2021 – 68 attendees
- WIOA Webinar to Present a Fiscal Toolkit – August 13, 2021 – 66 attendees
- A Hire Calling – Re-entry Employment – August 18, 2021 – 95 attendees
- The Multi-Generational Workplace – August 25, 2021 – 75 attendees
- Nonviolent Crisis Intervention and How It's Affected by This Pandemic – September 8, 2021 - 31 attendees
- Learning about Curt's Cafe: Cultivating Unique Restaurant Training – October 6, 2021 - 23 attendees
- WIOA Performance 101: An Overview of the Primary Indicators of Performance – October 27, 2021- 90 attendees
- How are My Local WIOA Performance Outcomes Determined and What are the Impacts of Success or Failure? – November 3, 2021 – 40 attendees
- Mental Illness Signs and Symptoms: Safe and Effective Responses - November 10, 2021 - 102 attendees
- PY 2022 Updates to the Governor's Guidelines and Regional/Local Planning guide – November 17, 2021- 123 attendees

- WIOA Performance Measures – Providing a Better Understanding of Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) – November 17, 2021- 96 attendees
- WIOA Performance – Credential Attainment Rate: Practical Discussion Towards Understanding the Methodology and Operational Parameters of the Measure - December 1, 2021 – 82 attendees
- WIOA Performance indicators - Employment (or Education/Training) - Based Measures for Title I – December 15, 2021- 60 attendees
- WIOA Title I YOUTH Performance Accountability - Understanding the Youth measures to optimize successful performance outcomes – January 19, 2022 – 155 attendees
- Understanding Substance Use Disorder – January 26, 2022 – 56 attendees
- WIOA Unified State Plan Modification Public Input Webinar – February 2, 2022 – 82 attendees
- Demand Occupation Training List (DOTL) Updates: What they mean to career planning and training programs – February 16, 2022 – 187 attendees
- WIOA Title I Program Exits - Rules on Exiting your WIOA Title I Program Participants in accordance with the Act – February 23, 2022 – 313 attendees
- Impact of Trauma – March 2, 2022 – 165 attendees
- Vicarious Trauma – March 9, 2022 – 135 attendees
- Culture and Trauma – March 16, 2022 – 161 attendees
- Trauma Informed Supervision – March 23, 2022 – 130 attendees
- Covid-19 and Trauma – March 30, 2022 – 154 attendees
- Building Trauma-Informed Remote Work Culture ICOY – April 6, 2022 – 142 attendees
- WIOA Title I Performance – Testing Your Knowledge – April 6, 2022 – 54 attendees
- ETPL Search Conversion to ProPath – April 20, 2022 – 139 attendees
- The Art of Case Notes – April 27, 2022 – 248 attendees
- Introduction to Grant Writing – May 10, 2022 – 59 attendees
- Reminders for WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09 Implementation and Reopening Plans – May 18, 2022 – 49 attendees
- Listen to Understand and Solution-Creation: Tips for Active Listening – June 15, 2022 – 67 attendees
- IWIB Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics Task Force Report – June 22, 2022 – 45 attendees
- The Art of Meeting Facilitation – June 29, 2022 – 63 attendees
- PY2020 Performance & SAM Roundtable – Recap and Next Steps – June 29, 2022 – 50 attendees

In addition, ICSPS supported the Governor’s Commission on Workforce Equity & Access by provided logistical support for the Commission Focus Groups for front line staff.

December 1, 2021 – focus on Title I in the morning session and Title II in the afternoon

December 8, 2021 – focused on Title II and then December 15, 2021, focused on Title IV.

The 2022 WIOA Summit reflects the commitment to collaboration and the unified mission fostered by WIOA law. The WIOA Summit is intentionally designed to assist our local core partner staff and board members, by providing practical guidance on service and system integration with a focus on equity, alignment, and collaboration. The WIOA Professional

Development Committee representing the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Department of Employment Securities, Illinois Community College Board, and the Illinois Department of Human Services hosted the 2022 WIOA Summit on April 28 – 29, 2022 with a theme of Economic Recovery and the Future of Work.

The Summit featured, 30 breakout sessions both in person, online, and on demand, three plenary sessions, greeting from each core partner and a welcome from the Governor of Illinois.

Statistics:

- 471 registered attendees.
- 225 attendees participated in person
- 470 attendees downloaded the app
- 344 personal agendas
- 58 community boards
- 72% felt the Summit met or exceeded their expectations
- 67% of attendees felt the Summit was very accessible.
- 78% of attendees found the Whova platform easy to navigate

All sessions and recordings are available at <https://ilworkforceacademy.com/wioa-summit-2022/>

APPENDIX

REMINDERS FOR WIOA NOTICE 20-NOT-09 IMPLEMENTATION AND AMENDMENTS TO REOPENING PLANS FOR AMERICAN JOB CENTERS



APPENDIX 2

Reminders for WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09 Implementation and Amendments to Reopening Plans for American Job Centers

TO: Chief Elected Officials

Local Workforce Innovation Board Chairpersons

Local Workforce Innovation Board Staff

WIOA Fiscal Agents and Grant Recipients

WIOA Program Services Administrators

Illinois WorkNet® Operators

WIOA State Agency Partners

Other Interested Persons

SUBJECT: Reminders about local implementation of
WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09 and amendments to
local American Job Center Reopening Plans

DATE: May 12, 2022

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09, issued June 2021, was to issue guidance for a safe return-to-work and reopening plan for American Job Centers (AJCs) that aligns with the existing Checklist for Reopening American Job Centers in Illinois in accordance with the Governor's "Restore Illinois" Plan. This WIOA Notice included a required reopening form that all centers listed within the notice must have completed and submitted to the Illinois WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance (TA) Team to start or to continue offering in-person services.

Since the initial enactment of this policy and the submission of local reopening forms, circumstances related to safety, security and mandates have evolved. This memo offers important reminders regarding the requirement to amend local reopening plans when substantive changes to local service delivery occurs at an AJC.

II. **CONTEXT**

The State of Illinois has been analyzing local data and tracking threats and incidents of violence at American Job Centers, resulting in protocols around known risks and the desire to mitigate risks for in-person staff and customers going forward. The following are some examples contributing to these ongoing safety concerns:

- Staff located at AJCs have encountered substantial security threats, which warrants the need for ongoing diligence to reduce risks and ensure all partners are in agreement before local service delivery models and staffing arrangements change.
- Processing the high volume of Unemployment Insurance claims associated with federal programs created in response to the pandemic.

The State has also monitored local data about the demand of different types of services and the need to consider walk-in services in combination with innovative outreach strategies to reach displaced workers and other populations in need. Due to processing pandemic-related unemployment insurance claims, IDES plans to continue offering all IDES-administered services by appointment only for the foreseeable future.

Pursuant to best practices and recommendations from the Illinois State Police and Illinois Central Management Services, the WIOA Interagency Team of all required program partners in Illinois offer these reminders to ensure local workforce systems remain safe with processes and procedures in place to de-escalate or respond to situations that arise as various service delivery methods are applied through walk-in, on-demand technology or by appointment.

III. **CIRCUMSTANCES THAT REQUIRE AN AMENDMENT TO AN AJC REOPENING PLAN**

As described in WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09 dated June 24, 2021, reopening plans are intended to be updated as circumstances change in a local area. Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIBs) must resubmit reopening plans to the WIOA Interagency TA Team through the WIOA inbox at wio-aplans-mous@illinoisworknet.com when substantive changes are made to the plan. Substantive changes include but are not limited to:

- Change in service delivery method by any onsite partner from what was already agreed upon in the original reopening plan.
 - Example 1: Walk-in services will be offered for some program services (excluding services that are administered by IDES that will remain by appointment only) for the first time since the original reopening plan was enacted.
 - Example 2: Orientations, job fairs, group classes will be offered in person and by appointment, if not already agreed upon by partners in the original reopening plan.
- Change to hours of operation or public office hours.
- Change to staffing levels or staffing plans to address service delivery changes and security measures.

IV. **REQUIRED FORM FOR AMENDING AJC REOPENING PLANS**

When substantive changes are planned to an AJC Reopening Plan, partners must complete the required form entitled, "Amendment to an American Job Center Reopening Plan." (See Exhibit 1 to this memo.)

Responses to the questions in the Amendment form must be completed with as much specificity as possible each time a substantive change in service delivery or staffing commitments are made throughout a program year.

V. **REMINDERS ABOUT OBTAINING AGREEMENT OF AMENDED REOPENING PLANS**

To recap, the four scenarios that apply to American Job Centers subject to WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09 follow.

- **Scenario A:** Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, Designated Affiliate and Specialized Centers or office where IDHS staff provide in-person UI services, where a State Agency is the leaseholder of the center and IDHS, Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs, DCEO or DHS staff are currently on-site or plan to return on-site with an agreed-upon reopening plan.
- **Scenario B:** Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, Designated Affiliate and Specialized Centers or office where IDHS, Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs, DCEO or DHS staff provide in-person services, but where a State Agency is not the leaseholder.
- **Scenario C:** Designated Affiliate and Designated Specialized Centers that are not leased by a State Agency and do not typically have on-site State Agency staff.
- **Scenario D:** WIOA access sites that are not included in other scenarios, including where a State Agency is not the leaseholder and State Agency staff members are not typically on-site (e.g., libraries).

The following requirements apply to "Scenario A," which include Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, Designated Affiliate and Specialized Centers or offices where IDHS staff provide in-person UI services, where a State Agency is the leaseholder of the center and IDHS, Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs, DCEO or DHS staff are currently on-site or plan to return on-site with an agreed-upon reopening plan (See WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09, IV(B)(3) for a list of centers categorized as "Scenario A"):

1. The State Agency Director or designee must agree to the local reopening plan before the plan or modified plan is signed by Local Workforce Innovation Board Chairs and Chief Elected Officials, submitted to the WIOA Interagency Team, and communicated to the public.
2. The State Agency Director or designee will determine whether State Agency employees will transition to or from an on-site presence at a particular center based on ongoing evaluations of security and risk mitigation measures in place.

3. Where IDES or DHS is the leaseholder and/or where in-person UI service are offered, the centers have been required to follow a phased-in plan, starting with opening for appointments only, then limited public hours, then walk-in services as permitted by the Governor's Restore Illinois Plan.

State Agency Directors or designees have discretion about when State Agency staff expand appointment availability or when services are offered to walk-in customers, as circumstances may arise that require a modification to the reopening plan in coordination with required partners in the applicable center (WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09, IV(A)15).

American Job Centers in all scenarios above must engage required partners with an onsite presence in the center during the process of amending original reopening plans. Following is a general process for amending and obtaining agreement on amended reopening plans in all LWIAs.

1. Convene all program partner representatives in good faith negotiations around proposed parameters that will be documented in the amended reopening plan. Any preferred alternative language should be brought to negotiation meetings for discussion and decision making.
2. Obtain agreement by all program partner representatives at the local level.
3. Then route the agreed-upon plan or amendment through the State Agency Directors or designees of state-administered programs, as applicable to centers where State Agency staff are or will be physically present.
4. After State Agency Director or designee confirm agreement, if applicable, then obtain signatures of the LWIB Chair and Chief Elected Officials.
5. Submit the fully executed reopening plan or amendment to the WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance (TA) Team as noted below.
6. Communicate the updated service delivery options to customers pursuant to the agreed-upon communications plan.

Submit amended and signed reopening plans to wioaplans-mous@illinoisworknet.com. Questions about the amendment process may also be submitted to the same WIOA email address.

Once reopening plans or amendments are fully agreed upon, signed and submitted to the WIOA Interagency TA Team, the plan or amended plan may be implemented.

The WIOA Interagency TA Team will review reopening plans and amendments to offer feedback or assistance to ensure compliance during implementation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Resources for safely reopening AJCs may be found at the following links:

- [Illinois workNet WIOA Implementation During COVID-19](#) page
- [WIOA e-Policy, Chapter 1, Section 12.8](#)
- [WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09](#)
- [Required form](#) to document a local reopening plan and amendments for American Job Centers
- [Frequently asked questions](#) document

In addition, a variety of resources are under development to support required partners at the State and local levels in considering and implementing new outreach strategies given the ongoing emergence of service delivery models. Technical assistance and webinars will be announced as new resources become available.

AMENDMENT

to an American Job Center Reopening Plan Under WIOA

Notice 20-NOT-09

[The Required Form to Document a Local Reopening Plan for American Job Centers](#) must include this completed and agreed upon Amendment form each time substantive changes to service delivery or staffing commitment are made throughout a program year.

All required program partners, including State Agency directors or designees of state-administered programs, if applicable, must agree to responses in this Amendment form before announcing and implementing the amended reopening plan.

1. Describe the process in which all partners reviewed and verified that the information and assurances provided in any initial reopening plan are accurate and current.

[type response here]

2. Explain the steps taken to ensure all staff within the AJC are aware of the reopening plan and are trained on all applicable AJC procedures, especially related to the safety and security such as de-escalation training (click on the link to access a webinar recording).

[type response here]

3. Identify the anticipated volume of customers for walk-in services. This includes reflecting on the volume of customers from pre-pandemic levels, to current levels, to anticipated levels. Examples of information that will inform a local area of anticipated customer volume includes reviewing a combination of data points available from local sources. Select the data points that are most applicable and available. Data points may include but are not limited to:

1. Volume of phone calls
2. Resource Room utilization levels
3. Number of eligibility determinations
4. Number of UI filings
5. Number of supportive services/referrals made
6. Number of career planner visits
7. Internet utilization levels
8. Description of specific unmet needs or demographics of individuals not served when walk-in services have not been available
9. Number of new participants needed to be served or enrolled in services to meet federally required performance metrics

[type response here]

4. List the specific services that are planned to be made available to walk-in customers and that are agreed upon by program partners.
[type response here]
5. Describe the agreed-upon plan for handling waiting lines outside of the AJC entrance, as well as times when public waiting areas have reached capacity limits.
[type response here]
6. Describe the agreed-upon plan for holding in-person orientations, workshops or other group events, including capacity limits for such group events. Include a description of how walk-in events will be handled versus appointment only events. Events include but are not limited to hiring events, orientations and classes.
[type response here]
7. Describe the agreed-upon staffing plan with a designated program position(s) for who will direct walk-in customers at the front door to ensure they have an appointment for IDES services or can access other program services as a walk-in that same day. As a best practice, the staffing plan should specify that a qualified program representative, not a security guard, should be the first point of contact for a customer to determine whether that customer needs an appointment or can access walk-in services on demand. However, the plan may outline any special circumstances that are agreed upon by all partners if someone other than a program representative will be the first point of contact for walk-in customers. In all cases, the staffing plan must be agreed upon by the State Agency Director or designee of state-administered programs present in the AJC.
[type response here]
9. Describe the agreed-upon security plan to ensure initial staff interaction with the public is within the security guard's line of sight, that security guards are aware of the service area, or that protocol for alerting security is known if staff need assistance during service delivery.
[type response here]

8. Confirm how the staffing plan prepares staff to de-escalate tension when walk-in customers also seek UI services while they are in the center even though they need to make an appointment for UI services.
[type response here]
10. Describe the Resource Room protocol when capacity is reached, and customers wait to access the Resource Room services.
[type response here]
11. Describe agreed-upon messaging, signage and communications plan to make it explicit to customers which services are available on a walk-in basis and which require appointments. If there will be external communication, describe the timeline, platform (e.g., email, social media, press releases, etc.) and the general language to be used.
[type response here]
12. Document the date and method of communications between all partners acknowledging their review and approval of this amended reopening plan.
[type response here]

APPENDIX

ILLINOIS'S EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS



APPENDIX 3

Illinois's Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Effectiveness in Servicing Employer Data Program Year 2021					
Employer Services					
Category of Services	DCEO Title I	ICCB Title II	IDES Title III	IDHS Title IV	Total Reported
Employer Information and Servicers	266	0	4591	626	5483
Workforce Recruitment Assistance	279	0	7068	0	7347
Engaged in Strategic Planning/Economic Development	64	0	111	0	175
Accessing Untapped Labor Pools	157	0	37	0	194
Training Services	757	587	2	341	1687
Incumbent Worker Training Services	207	0	1	0	208
Rapid Response/Business Downsizing Assistance	319	0	0	0	319
Planning Layoff Response	240	0	0	0	240

PY 2021	Numerator	Rate
Pilot Approaches	Denominator	
Retention with The Same Employer in the 2 nd and 4 th Quarter After Exit Rate	14,635 23,212,	63.0%
Employer Penetration Rate	12,444 397,311	3.1%

EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS DEFINITION OF SERVICES

Employer Information Services

Total unduplicated number of establishments that, during the reporting period, received staff assisted series designed to educate them about and engage them in the local job market/ economy and the range of services available through the local One-Stop delivery system. Establishment information services may be provided in a variety of service interventions including orientation sessions, workshops, or other business consultations. Information and support services that are delivered to establishment newsletters, brochures, or publications are not reportable services under this category

Workforce Recruitment Assistance

Enter the total number of unduplicated establishments that, during the reporting period, received workforce recruitment assistance from staff or remotely through electronic technologies.

Engaged in Strategic Planning/Economic Development

Enter total number of unduplicated establishments that, during the reporting period, were engaged in either workforce investment strategic planning or business growth and economic development strategic planning.

Assessing Untapped Labor Pools

Enter the total number of unduplicated establishments that, during the reporting period, established pipeline activities in partnership with the public workforce system.

Training Services

Enter the total number of unduplicated establishments that, during the reporting period, received publicly funded training assistance, including customized training, OJT, and incumbent worker training.

Incumbent Worker Training Services

Enter the total number of unduplicated establishments that, during the reporting period, received publicly funded incumbent worker training assistance.

Rapid Response/ Business Downsizing Assistance

Enter total number of unduplicated establishments that, during the reporting period, received an initial on-site visit or contact regarding one of two conditions.

Planning Layoff Response

Enter the total number of unduplicated establishments that received an initial on-site visit or contact, as required by WIOA section 3(51)(A), to plan a layoff response following notification of current or projected permanent closure of mass layoff, including natural or other disasters.

APPENDIX

SUCCESS STORIES





LWIA 1 JODIN JENKINS

Jodin Jenkins always listened to his grandmother and knew when she suggested he visit the Job Center of Lake County to help with his job search he should listen.

Jodin graduated from high school in 2017 and worked a variety of labor jobs but wanted to begin a business career and it was through the Job Center and his participation in employment and training programs that helped him get a job at the Lake County Treasurer's Office as a Real Estate Tax Information/ Collections Specialist and on a career pathway in business.

Jodin participated in career awareness and job readiness activities including resume assistance, financial literacy, and leadership development. Ready to go to work, Jodin was a candidate for an internship/ work experience opportunity and was placed at the Lake County Treasurer's Office in June 2021. During his six-month internship, Jodin was exposed to different roles and responsibilities in the office while receiving on-the-job training, coaching, and mentoring. He stated that

the position allowed him to improve his customer service and math skills and increased his attention to detail. He describes the Treasurer's Office as "the best place I've worked so far." Jodin's supervisor said that he grew in confidence throughout the internship.

After successful completion of the internship and demonstrated job skill gains, Jodin was hired permanently as a Real Estate Tax Information/ Collections Specialist at the Lake County Treasurer's office. He works on the front line of the busy office, interacting with property owners in Lake County. He resolves problems concerning accounts, analyzes statistical data, and prepares reports. Jodin's long term goal is to complete a college degree in business and gain financial stability to buy a house. In his current role, he is learning different rules and regulations for home ownership and says that he will have a better understanding about buying and keeping a home.

Lake County Workforce Development is dedicated to working with young people ages 18 to 24 as they enter the workforce. "The youth program and services remained mission-focused during the pandemic," explained Jennifer Everett, Program Manager. "Young people need to be connected to careers regardless of environmental pressure. This is the start of their professional lives."



LWIA 2 CALI RUDD

Cali's job layoff started a string of positive career and life changing decisions. That layoff was impacted by foreign trade and Cali was eligible for TAA benefits. The first tool needed was occupational skills training through the TAA grant. Her father had recently passed and there were other things in her life that needed her attention at the time, but she had to decide on training.

She worked with McHenry County Workforce to pull together all the Trade requirements to start her Occupational training. Through an assessment process with her career planner at McHenry County Workforce she realized that her original choice of an accounting career was not the best fit for her, so she decided on office management.

Cali started her classes at MCC for Administrative Office Management Certificate training. She attended classes full time, cared for an infant and toddler while also working part time as a waitress. With determination she completed the training as scheduled.

Cali started a Work Experience through McHenry County Workforce at Miller Formless to put her classroom skills into practice. After two weeks she received an offer for a position as Office Administrator.

McHenry County Workforce assisted her to continue her skill and career development in a Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship. Cali started a Human Resource Registered Apprenticeship. She receives On the Job Training through Miller Formless and the related classroom instruction through the Society of Human Resource Management, SHRM. She currently represents the company at job fairs as well as other recruitment and HR duties while contributing to a growing company.

"Without the assistance of the McHenry County Workforce, I would not have known about the agencies and programs available to assist me in furthering my career," Cali said. "This knowledge gave me the confidence to obtain my goals and to keep striving for more"



LWIA 3 CHRISTOPHER ROBARE

The Workforce Connection was first introduced to Christopher Robare through a referral from the Rockford Rescue Mission. He was homeless and wanted to work in an office or customer service setting, but he lacked the experience. His previous work experience was in retail and factory work. He wanted to change careers. Living at the Mission and contending with COVID restrictions and lockdowns made the situation even more difficult.

The staff's first interactions were over Zoom, but even then, they could see that he was kind, bright, polite and driven to improve his situation. The Workforce Connection Career Center, which was within walking distance of the mission, hired him into the WIOA temporary work experience program as a Career Center Assistant WEX. He performed so well that when a full time Career Center position became available, he was hired to fill that role. His life challenges and positive attitude make him uniquely qualified to assist participants in the Career Center.

"By going through the Work Experience program I was able to learn the office skills I had been lacking

and unable to learn on my own, enabling me to be able to find employment, first as human resources at a security company and then being hired full time with The Workforce Connection as a Community Navigator," Christopher said. "I was also able to get linked up with services allowing me to rent my own apartment, help paying for electricity through LIHEAP, and get connected with SNAP assistance for food."

"With my job at The Workforce Connection, I am able to connect people with resources of their own to both help them through hard times and get them training or assistance with finding a job. It is my chance to give back to those who are in a similar or even worse position than I was at the time. I am grateful to be able to give back to the community in such a way."



LWIA 21 MARSHALL BROWN

Marshall Brown went through a re-entry program before the end of a seven-year prison stint to prepare him for a return to normal life. Marshall arrived in Carlinville homeless and met the local Catholic Charities, which guided him through the process of obtaining a State ID as well as possible assistance with rent while he found housing and employment.

As part of his return to civilian life, Marshall came into the Carlinville Job Center to search for jobs.

Since he did not have his own phone, he used the Job Center phone to look for housing. During the heavy rains the staff at the job center would try to find shelter for Marshall and continued to assist him with his search for housing assistance. Until Marshall obtained his own phone and found safe and secure housing, it would be hard for him to obtain permanent employment.

IDES assisted him in creating a resume and job search on Illinois Job Link along with the Job Center staff assisting with his job search. Marshall took the train to Springfield for a job opportunity, but that situation did not work out.

Back to the housing and job search, Don Adams from Express Personnel was hosting a Job Fair at R&R Bindery in Girard, Illinois. Marshall attended a job fair in Girard, Illinois, where he found an opportunity, applied, interviewed, and was hired on the spot. But Marshall had one more obstacle to overcome – housing. The Job Center staff continued to help him in his search. A staff member told Marshall about a family that tries to help the “underdog.” It was a weekend and bad weather was expected again. The staff provided drinks, snacks, gift cards and made a make-shift bedroll from whatever items they could find in the center. The staff left work Friday night giving Marshall access to stay outside the building if needed. Marshall proceeded to stop by and see the caring family in Carlinville. The family offered Marshall temporary shelter at their home. Marshall started working full-time at his new position, found an apartment in Carlinville and was subsequently offered a permanent position after a 90-day probation period.



LWIA 22 ELIZABETH WATERS BOTTERBUSH

Elizabeth contacted the Jersey/Calhoun Employment and Training office in Jerseyville, Illinois while she was employed as a CNA at Calhoun Nursing and Rehabilitation Center earning \$13 an hour. In this position, Elizabeth was not able to fully support her family. She wanted to obtain her License Practical Nursing to increase her employment opportunities and income.

Elizabeth decided to make her career advancement during the initial phase of COVID-19 and the WIOA office building were closed. LWIA staff were able to communicate and provide assistance to Elizabeth over the telephone and the internet. Elizabeth gathered all the necessary documentation, completed the assessments and began to move forward. Elizabeth and staff made arrangements outside of the office to meet and complete WIOA paperwork.

With a desire to seek better employment opportunities, Elizabeth applied to the Career Alternatives Learning Center in Alton (CALC), Illinois - License Practical Nursing (LPN) program. Elizabeth was granted admission into the LPN program, but she quickly realized that the cost of the program was

too much for her and her family to afford. CALC referred Elizabeth for tuition assistance.

At the time of her WIOA enrollment, Elizabeth was married with a six-year-old daughter, Libby, who was born with a pituitary gland problem and requires frequent medical injections. Also during this time, Elizabeth's husband, Jacob, had been fighting a two year battle with cancer that often led to ongoing hospital visits. He had both hip bones replaced

and got around in a wheelchair. He had a part time job as a dispatcher at the local sheriff's office. Jacob was very supportive and encouraging for Elizabeth to complete the LPN program.

Elizabeth was able to begin her first term at CALC on May 28, 2020 and maintain a 3.6 GPA throughout program. Due to COVID-19 her classes were held online and in-school when necessary. Elizabeth continued working midnights as a CNA while completing classes during the day.

Elizabeth graduated from CALC with her LPN certificate August 30, 2021 and secured her Illinois State Board December 2021. Unfortunately, in February 2022, Elizabeth's husband Jacob passed away. Elizabeth continued her employment at Calhoun Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, but with a different title and level of pay. On October 1, 2021, she began working as a LPN earning \$24.50 an hour.



LWIA 20 ILLINOIS RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance began an Apprenticeship program with the Illinois Rural Water Association after a referral from Illinois Department of Human Services – Rehabilitation Services. This project helped start a Water Systems Operation Specialist Apprenticeship with five water districts in Central Illinois. The water industry is unique in that it involves the daily responsibilities of public health protection, technical operations, and maintenance of critical but unseen infrastructure.

It takes more than 380,000 highly skilled water and wastewater personnel to ensure the public supply of safe drinking water and to protect our lakes, streams, and groundwater. Advancements in water treatment and supply technology have increased the skills and training required of individuals in this industry. Water professionals are ultimately responsible for meeting stringent regulatory standards, replacing aging infrastructure, recruiting and training new operations specialists, and responding to and recovering from disaster. Jeff Tumiati, the Apprenticeship Coordinator for the Illinois Water Associa-

tion said, “There is such a workforce shortage and this program has impacted each local community greatly because in two and half years each community will have a Water/Wastewater Specialist that can handle the operations of water facilities and support their infrastructure.

In addition to increasing professional demands, utilities will soon be forced to replace many of their most experienced employees. Over the next decade, the water sector is expected to lose between 30 and 50 percent of the workforce due to retirement. Many of these employees have worked at the same facility for the majority of their careers and they will depart with decades of valuable institutional knowledge. Due to these issues, Tumiati stated, “Partnering with the workforce system is overall a great deal. This project impacted the apprentices in each community with financial help and resources that we did not otherwise know about. Also, Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance was very easy to work with and helped whenever we needed assistance.”

This innovative project is the perfect example of what the local workforce areas do throughout the State. This apprenticeship has led to the training and employment of five full-time Water Systems Operation Specialists. Their training and education, all due to partnering with Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance, will impact communities in Central Illinois for many years to come.



LWIA 22 GATEWAY BRONCO

Gateway Bronco is a handcrafted assembly line, specializing in restoration and custom build Broncos, producing over 50 custom builds a year, with a goal over 70 per year. All production is completed in house, providing multiple opportunities for training and employment throughout the manufacturing process. The company culture is to strive to empower and invest in all employees as well as foster a collaborative, team focused environment, adding to the employee's quality of life and overall satisfaction. Gateway Bronco is the picture of leadership in our local workforce area. They are in the small rural village of Hamel, Illinois with less than 1,000 residents.

Gateway Bronco is a relatively young company less than 10 years old and growing. The company was an unknowing WIOA supporter, before partnering with Madison County Employment and Training by hiring WIOA trained CDL drivers. Gateway Bronco has partnered with Madison County Employment and Training (LWIA 22) on multiple projects in the last year. Currently, they have 2 individuals participating in On-The-Job training and have started an Incumbent Worker Training for Continuous Im-

provement Transformation. Seth Burgett, founder of Gateway Bronco and the team are prioritizing growth for all individuals of the company, with a strong emphasis on, "Character, Competence, and Culture."

They are consistently looking inside and outside of the company for ways to advance their process and procedures for every employee including leadership. The Gateway Bronco team understands how important community is to their business, Seth has participated with a local Career Days, visiting his old high school as a keynote speaker, inspiring students to look at the trades for self-sustaining and advancing careers, encouraging students to hold on to their dreams and find a path to accomplish them. After career days, the Gateway Bronco Team was introduced to the Collinsville Area Vocational Center, where they subsequently hired a graduating senior, providing him an opportunity to utilize his skills, while acquiring additional skills.

Their leadership shows that it does not matter how big, small, or what a company does, that anyone can be a leader and benefit their local communities. Seth and Gateway Bronco are the epitome of how business should operate.



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