Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the U.S. Secretary of Labor that outlines a four-year workforce development strategy for the State’s workforce development system. The publicly-funded workforce system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all jobseekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA’s principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.
OPTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A STATE PLAN

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan — a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are—

- the Adult Program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker Program (Title I),
- the Youth Program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Literacy Program (Title II),
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III), and
- the Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA’s core programs plus one or more of the Combined Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” (Sections II and III of this document) where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are—

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (Programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))
States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.
HOW STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS ARE ORGANIZED

The major content areas of the Unified or Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- **The Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State’s economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State’s workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.
- **The Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State’s efforts to support the State’s strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:
  - State Strategy Implementation,
  - State Operating Systems and Policies,
  - Assurances, and
  - Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
  - Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs.

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.* While discussion of and strategies for every target population is not expected, States must address as many as are applicable to their State’s population and look beyond strategies for the general population.

* Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

TARGETED POPULATIONS

The concentration of growth in higher-skill occupations will require more targeted initiatives with populations requiring assistance to attain the credentials necessary to pursue opportunities in in-demand occupations in key sectors. Estimates of need for many of these targeted populations are included in Attachment D (www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan). Targeted populations in Illinois will include the following:

- Long-term unemployed
- Low-income adults
- Individuals with disabilities, including youth with disabilities
- Those receiving public assistance
- Out-of-school youth
- Veterans
- Migrant and seasonal farmworkers
Illinois has launched statewide initiatives to address the needs of specific populations facing barriers to employment, and the WIOA partners will identify effective practices and resources to address the employment needs of each of the targeted populations listed above. The following examples describe the types of approaches that will be used to meet the needs of these populations.

LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED

Though the unemployment rate in Illinois has improved along with the rest of the country since the start of the economic recovery, long-term unemployment, defined as unemployment of duration of 27 weeks or longer, remains a problem throughout the state. According to the USBLS, Illinois leads all six of its neighboring states in percentage, number and duration of long-term unemployed, with an average duration of 38.5 weeks for 2014, well in excess of the 26-week limit on individual unemployment insurance benefits. Such persistent unemployment can have ripple effects throughout local economic areas. To address these challenges, Commerce has leveraged multiple National Emergency Grants targeting long-term unemployed and piloted innovative strategies, such as Group Discovery, to address the unique needs of the population.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Unemployment among individuals with disabilities is a national epidemic and Illinois is no exception. In a report from the USBLS, the unemployment rate in November 2015 for those with a disability, ages 16 and over, was 12.1 percent, almost three times that of individuals that do not have disabilities. The labor force participation rate that month for those with disabilities was 19.2 percent. Those without disabilities were recorded at 68.3 percent. Illinois works to address that disparity through better service alignment between the partner programs, in addition to Disability Employment Initiative projects in targeted geographies throughout the state that build the capacity of American Job Centers to address the needs of adults with disabilities. Illinois also prioritizes multilevel partnerships between the workforce, secondary and post-secondary systems to provide career pathway programs to youth with disabilities.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH

Approximately 184,000 youth age 18-24 in Illinois are considered “disconnected”, meaning they are not attending school and are not working. This number is approximately 15% of the 18-24 population statewide. Meanwhile, unemployment among this group stands at 22.1%, according to USBLS data, approximately five times that of the state as a whole. To address these issues, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) created the Disadvantaged Youth Career Pathways Task Force to develop recommendations for building pilot projects that will seek to blend different sources of public funds,
engage businesses for work-based learning and other initiatives and create sustainable career pathways for youth throughout the state. The “Report of the Illinois Disadvantaged Youth Task Force” was accepted by the IWIB in February 2016. Recommendations include: reinvigoration of cross-agency and cross-sector statewide supports for career pathway system development under the framework of Illinois pathways, creation of regional opportunity youth systems and the continuation of the work of the Youth Task Force as a function of the IWIB. The full report is available in Attachment E (www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan).
VETERANS

Serving Illinois’ 721,000 veterans is a high priority of the workforce system in Illinois. Veterans receive priority of service as required by WIOA. The Illinois workforce centers are committed to helping veterans find a job, training and other services. Employment Security employs veterans’ employment representatives, who are fellow veterans and specialists in providing employment services. Illinois veterans have been served over the years though targeted initiatives administered by the workforce and education partners and the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Approximately 2.73 million Illinois residents speak a language other than English as the primary language in their homes, and more than 331,368 immigrants are currently residing in Illinois. An English language learner is an individual who has limited ability in reading, writing, and speaking or comprehending the English language, and whose native language is a language other than English or who lives in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language.

LOW LITERACY ADULTS (INCLUDING THOSE WITHOUT A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA)

Employers increasingly require postsecondary credentials when hiring workers for good jobs that provide family-supporting wages and career advancement opportunities. Almost 1.2 million of Illinois’ 10.1 million adults have less than 12 grades of formal education. Included in this number are 470,138 people with less than a 9th grade education. Low Literate adults are individuals who are basic skills deficient with academic skill levels below the postsecondary level, and who do not have the ability to read, write, speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalency.

LOW SKILLED ADULTS

With good jobs becoming harder to find for people with a high school diploma or less, it is critical to help low-skilled workers obtain the skills that are needed to be successful in postsecondary employment and training. According to a Report by the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE formerly OVAE) Promoting College and Career Readiness: Bridge Programs for Low-Skilled Adults, defines Low-skill adults as individuals who lack the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in postsecondary education and training, or meet the demands of the current labor market.
I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

Unified or Combined State Plan. Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

Unified State Plan. This plan includes the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Yes

Combined State Plan. This plan includes the Adult Worker Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program as well as one or more of the optional combined State Plan partner programs identified below. No
Indicate which Combined Plan partner program(s) the state is electing to include in the plan.

Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)  No

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)  No

Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))  No

Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o)))  No

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))  No

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et seq.)  No

Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)  No

Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))  No

Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development  No

Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))  No

Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))  No
II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

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

A. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

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

I. EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

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

II. EMERGING INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATION

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

III. EMPLOYERS’ EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

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

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) houses the state’s labor market economists and provides data and information to support state, regional and local workforce and economic development initiatives. The State of Illinois established an Interagency Data Team with representatives from the core program partners including Employment Security, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce), Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) to establish the framework for the data that is used in the economic and workforce analysis. Illinois is looking to formalize the relationship of the Interagency Data Team so that it serves as an ongoing resource, extending beyond the development of the Unified State Plan and supporting the implementation of the state, regional and local plans.

The economic and workforce analysis presented highlights data that is publicly available and provides an analysis process that is easily replicable using no-cost data sources. The state encourages regional and local partners to regularly and systemically analyze and validate complementary data through various forms of business engagement. The long-term goal is to develop the most robust data collection possible so that supply and demand projections benefit from as near to real-time information as possible.

Economic Analysis

Three of the most important economic benchmarks used by Illinois to both understand our economic position and to evaluate the effectiveness of our efforts to improve that position, are overall economic production, employment and earnings. Examining these three indicators across the past ten years provides an uncommonly stark description of Illinois’ experience before, across and since the “Great Recession” during the final years of the first decade of the 21st century.
Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

The main narrative told by the numbers in Table 1 is that Illinois was struck hard by the economic downturn - harder than the nation overall, but not as hard as our fellow states in the Great Lakes region (IL, IN, MI, OH and WI). Illinois’ overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by an infinitesimal six-tenths of one percent from 2004-2009. But even that far surpassed our neighbors, whose combined economies shrank by nearly five percent. Similar stories are told by changes in employment and earnings from 2004 to 2009. Illinois gained only a handful of jobs - much less than the nation as a whole, but still ahead of the Great Lakes region overall. The story since 2009 has been one of a lagging recovery for Illinois. While we have seen increases in all three of these measures, Illinois has trailed the region in the pace of those increases.
### Table 1: Illinois vs. Benchmark States vs. Nation: Change in GDP, Employment and Earnings over Last 10 Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gross Domestic Product</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ILLINOIS</td>
<td>637,828</td>
<td>641,880</td>
<td>680,448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Lakes Region*</td>
<td>2,090,863</td>
<td>1,995,394</td>
<td>2,187,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>13,772,746</td>
<td>14,329,566</td>
<td>15,773,516</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Percent Change in Gross Domestic Product

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ILLINOIS</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Lakes Region*</td>
<td>-4.6%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Percent Change in Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ILLINOIS</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Lakes Region*</td>
<td>-4.0%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>-0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Percent Change in Earnings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ILLINOIS</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Lakes Region*</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Defined by the US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis to include: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin

Sources:
- **Gross Domestic Product**: Bureau of Economic Analysis Real GDP by State (millions of chained 2009 dollars)
- **Employment**: Haver Analytics, Bureau of Labor Statistics
- **Earnings**: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Compensation of Employees by NAICS Industry (Table SA6N), wage and salary data
The situation described by these numbers provides the setting for planning the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The challenge for Illinois is to utilize WIOA and all of its partner programs to assist the state’s businesses in increasing productivity, employment and earnings throughout the state.

Table 2 shows the projected employment demand through 2022 for major industry sectors across Illinois. The largest number of job openings is expected to be created within the business services and health care sectors. Large percentage changes in employment are expected in wholesale trade and a resurgent construction sector.
Table 2: Illinois Employment by Major Industry Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES</td>
<td>6,166,236</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>6,678,572</td>
<td>512,336</td>
<td>8.31%</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Production</td>
<td>76,292</td>
<td>1.24%</td>
<td>76,584</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>0.38%</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources and Mining</td>
<td>10,137</td>
<td>0.16%</td>
<td>11,695</td>
<td>1,558</td>
<td>15.37%</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>23,809</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
<td>24,322</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>2.15%</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>188,916</td>
<td>3.06%</td>
<td>215,181</td>
<td>26,265</td>
<td>13.90%</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>582,735</td>
<td>9.45%</td>
<td>581,655</td>
<td>-1,080</td>
<td>-0.19%</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>294,361</td>
<td>4.77%</td>
<td>324,652</td>
<td>30,291</td>
<td>10.29%</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>596,393</td>
<td>9.67%</td>
<td>632,132</td>
<td>35,739</td>
<td>5.99%</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Warehousing</td>
<td>273,535</td>
<td>4.44%</td>
<td>293,395</td>
<td>19,860</td>
<td>7.26%</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>100,018</td>
<td>1.62%</td>
<td>98,113</td>
<td>-1,905</td>
<td>-1.90%</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Activities</td>
<td>365,716</td>
<td>5.93%</td>
<td>392,651</td>
<td>26,935</td>
<td>7.37%</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and Business Services</td>
<td>860,924</td>
<td>13.96%</td>
<td>1,020,527</td>
<td>159,603</td>
<td>18.54%</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services, Private and Public*</td>
<td>568,857</td>
<td>9.23%</td>
<td>500,804</td>
<td>31,947</td>
<td>5.62%</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>733,693</td>
<td>11.90%</td>
<td>841,289</td>
<td>107,596</td>
<td>14.65%</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and Hospitality</td>
<td>535,716</td>
<td>8.69%</td>
<td>580,005</td>
<td>44,289</td>
<td>8.27%</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal and Other Services</td>
<td>280,007</td>
<td>4.54%</td>
<td>300,240</td>
<td>20,233</td>
<td>7.23%</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>365,894</td>
<td>5.93%</td>
<td>365,720</td>
<td>-174</td>
<td>-0.05%</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Employed, Unpaid Family Workers and Others n.</td>
<td>309,233</td>
<td>5.01%</td>
<td>319,607</td>
<td>10,374</td>
<td>3.35%</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Location Quotient for “Educational Services, Private and Public” is for 2014
Figure 1 factors in percentage growth and a measure of industry importance in the state (location quotient), with “bubble” size indicating the relative size of the industry.

Figure 1: Illinois Industry Sectors, 2012-2022 Employment Change by Location Quotient by 2012 Employment
Table 3 shows the projected employment demand through 2022 for major occupational sectors throughout Illinois. The largest numbers of new jobs are expected to be created within the transportation and material moving, sales, healthcare, food service, business and financial operations and computer and mathematical occupation sectors. Large numbers of job openings (including replacement jobs) are expected in sales and office and administrative occupations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Title</th>
<th>Base Year Employment</th>
<th>Share of Statewide Base Year Employment</th>
<th>Projection Year Employment</th>
<th>Net Employment Change 2012-2022</th>
<th>Average Annual Job Openings due to Growth Replacements Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL, ALL OCCUPATIONS</td>
<td>6,166,236</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>6,678,572</td>
<td>512,336</td>
<td>8.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Material Moving Occup.</td>
<td>460,208</td>
<td>7.46%</td>
<td>513,176</td>
<td>52,968</td>
<td>11.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and Related Occupations</td>
<td>636,874</td>
<td>10.33%</td>
<td>678,851</td>
<td>41,977</td>
<td>6.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occs</td>
<td>330,411</td>
<td>5.36%</td>
<td>371,129</td>
<td>40,718</td>
<td>12.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Preparation and Serving Occupations</td>
<td>451,936</td>
<td>7.33%</td>
<td>491,829</td>
<td>39,693</td>
<td>8.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Financial Operations Occup.</td>
<td>315,143</td>
<td>5.11%</td>
<td>353,460</td>
<td>38,317</td>
<td>12.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Support Occupations</td>
<td>172,031</td>
<td>2.79%</td>
<td>207,310</td>
<td>35,279</td>
<td>20.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office and Administrative Support Occup.</td>
<td>917,264</td>
<td>14.88%</td>
<td>951,675</td>
<td>34,411</td>
<td>3.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction and Extraction Occupations</td>
<td>220,061</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
<td>249,079</td>
<td>29,018</td>
<td>13.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer and Mathematical Occupations</td>
<td>152,628</td>
<td>2.48%</td>
<td>181,295</td>
<td>28,667</td>
<td>18.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Occupations</td>
<td>459,745</td>
<td>7.46%</td>
<td>485,377</td>
<td>25,632</td>
<td>5.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Training and Library Occup.</td>
<td>410,319</td>
<td>6.65%</td>
<td>434,583</td>
<td>24,264</td>
<td>5.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maint. Occs</td>
<td>229,563</td>
<td>3.72%</td>
<td>253,732</td>
<td>24,169</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Care and Service Occupations</td>
<td>187,390</td>
<td>3.04%</td>
<td>209,960</td>
<td>22,570</td>
<td>12.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Occupations</td>
<td>445,529</td>
<td>7.23%</td>
<td>466,575</td>
<td>21,046</td>
<td>4.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installation, Maintenance and Repair Occs</td>
<td>202,930</td>
<td>3.29%</td>
<td>220,543</td>
<td>17,613</td>
<td>8.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective Service Occupations</td>
<td>153,906</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
<td>162,477</td>
<td>8,571</td>
<td>5.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and Social Services Occupations</td>
<td>102,398</td>
<td>1.66%</td>
<td>110,938</td>
<td>8,540</td>
<td>8.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts/Design/Entertainment, Sports/Media Occs</td>
<td>98,826</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
<td>105,138</td>
<td>6,312</td>
<td>6.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Occupations</td>
<td>53,470</td>
<td>0.87%</td>
<td>59,545</td>
<td>6,075</td>
<td>11.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture and Engineering Occupations</td>
<td>83,585</td>
<td>1.38%</td>
<td>88,821</td>
<td>5,236</td>
<td>6.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life, Physical and Social Science Occupations</td>
<td>55,102</td>
<td>0.57%</td>
<td>56,970</td>
<td>1,868</td>
<td>3.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming, Fishing and Forestry Occupations</td>
<td>46,937</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
<td>46,309</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>-1.34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Based on the information contained in Table 2, major industry sectors were categorized according to the following methodology:

- **LEADING** industries are identified as those which are expected to grow during the projection period, and which are important within the state (i.e., have a location quotient greater than 1.0). These industries are found in the upper right hand quadrant of Figure 1.
- **EMERGING** industries are identified as those that are not strongly represented in the current economy (i.e., have a location quotient that is less than 1.0), but are expected to grow during the projection period. These industries are found in the lower right hand quadrant of Figure 1.
- **MATURING** industries are identified as those that are important within the state, but are not expected to grow during the projection period. These industries are found in the upper left hand quadrant of Figure 1.

Each of these categories are significant for the economy, for job growth and availability, and are hence important for planning WIOA and partner programs during the period of this Unified State Plan. In summary, leading industries are those that will likely provide the largest numbers of job openings, due to their combination of size and growth; emerging industries are those that are currently small but are quickly gaining in economic importance and job creation; and maturing industries are those which have slower job growth but still have hefty presences in the economy and will continue to create significant job openings, if only through attrition (e.g., accelerating retirements).

Tables 4, 5 and 6 display the results of categorizing (according to this methodology) the major industries from Table 3. Major industry categories that are not included in one of these categories are now dropped from the analysis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES</td>
<td>6,166,236</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>6,678,572</td>
<td>512,336</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and Business Services</td>
<td>860,924</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>1,020,527</td>
<td>159,603</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>733,693</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>841,289</td>
<td>107,596</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services, Private and Public</td>
<td>568,857</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>600,804</td>
<td>31,947</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>294,361</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>324,652</td>
<td>30,291</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Activities</td>
<td>365,716</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>392,651</td>
<td>26,935</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal and Other Services</td>
<td>280,007</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>300,240</td>
<td>20,233</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Warehousing</td>
<td>273,535</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>293,395</td>
<td>19,860</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>23,809</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>24,322</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5: EMERGING Major Industry Sectors Statewide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,166,236</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>6,678,572</td>
<td>512,336</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and Hospitality</td>
<td></td>
<td>535,716</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>580,005</td>
<td>44,289</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td></td>
<td>596,393</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>632,132</td>
<td>35,739</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td></td>
<td>188,916</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>215,181</td>
<td>26,265</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6: MATURING Major Industry Sectors Statewide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,166,236</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>6,678,572</td>
<td>512,336</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td></td>
<td>582,735</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>581,655</td>
<td>(1,080)</td>
<td>-0.2%</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For those major industries that are included, we can drill down the analysis to each of the industry sectors (3-digit NAICS-level industries) (North American Industry Classification System - http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/) found within these major industry categories. The tables found in Attachment B at www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan display the leading, emerging and maturing industry sectors within the major industry categories identified in the first step.

The regional planning process utilizes the same analytic steps to assist regional teams in identifying leading, emerging and maturing industry clusters within each region. The regional planning process includes the development of crosswalks between the detailed (3-digit) industry clusters and the occupational pathway for each region. The results of this crosswalk identify occupations related to the detailed industry clusters identified statewide as leading, emerging and maturing. These are considered starting points for conversations with employers regarding critical occupations within their industries during the complete regional planning process. Table 7 below summarizes the leading, emerging and maturing sectors identified for each of the statewide Economic Development Regions on the basis of these current and projected employment data, along with a brief comment on each region.

This table consists of ten rows, one for each of the ten Economic Development Regions in Illinois. For each region, industry sectors are identified based on their employment profile within the region: leading (industries that are concentrated within the region and are expected to grow through 2022); emerging (industries that are not currently concentrated with the region, but are expected to grow through 2022) and; maturing (industries that are concentrated within the region, but are not expected to create new jobs through 2022, although they will add employees through separation). A brief summary analysis is also provided for each region, highlighting important sectors within that region.

**Table 7: Leading, Emerging and Maturing Sectors Identified by Economic Development Region**

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

Shown below, in Figures 2a and 2b and in Tables 8a-d, are examples - for Health Care in the Northeast Region and for Manufacturing in the Southwest Region - of information that was prepared for each region to use in their regional planning processes. The information provided to each region is currently available on Illinois WorkNet (https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan). The information in Figures 2a and 2b is analogous to that shown for the state in Figure 1. Tables 8a and 8b show regional employment across industry sectors, and are the basis for Figures 2a and 2b. Tables 8c and 8d show regional employment within specific industries in the example sectors. Tables 8e and 8f show regional employment within occupations associated with those industries. In each case, the intention was for the regional planning groups to review and analyze this data in order to help identify sectors for which regional sector talent pipeline projects might be most appropriate.
### Table 8a: Northeast Region Employment by Industry/Occupational Cluster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>2012 Employment</th>
<th>2022 Employment</th>
<th>Net Employment Change</th>
<th>Percent Employment Change</th>
<th>Concentration (Location Quotient)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing &amp; Sales</td>
<td>1,486,398</td>
<td>1,655,634</td>
<td>169,236</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality &amp; Tourism</td>
<td>1,072,558</td>
<td>1,195,218</td>
<td>122,660</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law &amp; Public Safety</td>
<td>659,602</td>
<td>785,008</td>
<td>125,406</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Management</td>
<td>503,349</td>
<td>583,855</td>
<td>80,506</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>498,816</td>
<td>581,060</td>
<td>82,244</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, Distribution &amp; Logistics</td>
<td>390,479</td>
<td>433,897</td>
<td>43,418</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Training</td>
<td>379,002</td>
<td>398,055</td>
<td>19,053</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>376,840</td>
<td>374,497</td>
<td>- 2,343</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>258,940</td>
<td>269,960</td>
<td>11,020</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>161,560</td>
<td>185,578</td>
<td>24,018</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>64,820</td>
<td>86,724</td>
<td>21,904</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Audio Visual</td>
<td>60,547</td>
<td>64,394</td>
<td>3,847</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research &amp; Development</td>
<td>48,530</td>
<td>51,189</td>
<td>2,659</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>14,033</td>
<td>16,210</td>
<td>2,177</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>12,304</td>
<td>12,919</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 8b: Southwest Region Employment by Industry/Occupational Cluster

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>621</td>
<td>Ambulatory Health Care Services</td>
<td>169,318</td>
<td>217,633</td>
<td>48,315</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>18,124</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>622</td>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>168,462</td>
<td>171,202</td>
<td>2,740</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>623</td>
<td>Nursing and Residential Care Facilities</td>
<td>81,533</td>
<td>99,606</td>
<td>18,073</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>624</td>
<td>Social Assistance</td>
<td>79,503</td>
<td>92,619</td>
<td>13,116</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>3,942</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8d: Leading, Emerging and Maturing Manufacturing Industries in the Southwest Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>311</td>
<td>Food Manufacturing</td>
<td>3,468</td>
<td>3,502</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>Leading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>312</td>
<td>Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>-11.9%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>313</td>
<td>Textile Mills</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>314</td>
<td>Textile Product Mills</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>315</td>
<td>Apparel Manufacturing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>316</td>
<td>Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>321</td>
<td>Wood Product Manufacturing</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>322</td>
<td>Paper Manufacturing</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>(43)</td>
<td>-9.1%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>323</td>
<td>Printing and Related Support Activities</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>(149)</td>
<td>-24.7%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>324</td>
<td>Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing</td>
<td>1,056</td>
<td>1,082</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>Leading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>325</td>
<td>Chemical Manufacturing</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>(28)</td>
<td>-2.9%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>326</td>
<td>Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>-6.4%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>327</td>
<td>Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>Leading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>331</td>
<td>Primary Metal Manufacturing</td>
<td>5,847</td>
<td>5,868</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.38</td>
<td>Leading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>332</td>
<td>Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing</td>
<td>3,443</td>
<td>3,577</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>Leading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>333</td>
<td>Machinery Manufacturing</td>
<td>1,227</td>
<td>1,182</td>
<td>(45)</td>
<td>-3.7%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>334</td>
<td>Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>-15.6%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>335</td>
<td>Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>-1.7%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>Maturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>336</td>
<td>Transportation Equipment Manufacturing</td>
<td>1,431</td>
<td>1,474</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>337</td>
<td>Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>339</td>
<td>Miscellaneous Manufacturing</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8: Occupational Employment in Health Care Industries in the Northeast Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAICS</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2014 Establishments</th>
<th>2012 Employment</th>
<th>2022 Employment</th>
<th>Industry Class</th>
<th>Pathway</th>
<th>SOC Code</th>
<th>SOC Title</th>
<th>Average Annual Job Openings</th>
<th>Annual Occupation Openings In Industry</th>
<th>Median Annual</th>
<th>Education Entry Level</th>
<th>Experience Entry Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>621</td>
<td>Ambulatory Health Care Services</td>
<td>18,124</td>
<td>169,318</td>
<td>217,633</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Therapeutic Services</td>
<td>28-1141</td>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>1,421</td>
<td>571,946</td>
<td>Associate’s or Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>621</td>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>168,482</td>
<td>171,201</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Therapeutic Services</td>
<td>28-171</td>
<td>Nurse Practitioners</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>582,080</td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>621</td>
<td>Nursing and Residential Care Facilities</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>81,533</td>
<td>99,600</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Therapeutic Services</td>
<td>28-2021</td>
<td>Dental Hygienists</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>373,720</td>
<td>Associate’s degree</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>621</td>
<td>Social Assistance</td>
<td>3,942</td>
<td>79,903</td>
<td>91,619</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Therapeutic Services</td>
<td>28-2041</td>
<td>Emergency Medical Technicians</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>552,898</td>
<td>Post-secondary non-degree award</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>622</td>
<td>Ambulatory Health Care Services</td>
<td>18,124</td>
<td>169,318</td>
<td>217,633</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Therapeutic Services</td>
<td>28-2052</td>
<td>Pharmacy Technicians</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>528,118</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>622</td>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>168,482</td>
<td>171,201</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Therapeutic Services</td>
<td>28-2061</td>
<td>Licensed Practical Nurses</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>548,251</td>
<td>Post-secondary non-degree award</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>624</td>
<td>Social Assistance</td>
<td>3,942</td>
<td>79,903</td>
<td>91,619</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Therapeutic Services</td>
<td>28-1141</td>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>1,421</td>
<td>571,946</td>
<td>Associate’s or Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 8f: Occupational Employment in Manufacturing Industries in the Southwest Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANUFACTURING</th>
<th>INDUSTRIES FOR PRINCIPAL OCCUPATIONS IN THE SOUTHWEST REGION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>324</td>
<td>Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>325</td>
<td>Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>326</td>
<td>Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>327</td>
<td>Machinery Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>328</td>
<td>Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>329</td>
<td>Food Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>330</td>
<td>Beverages and Tobacco Product Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>331</td>
<td>Wood Product Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>332</td>
<td>Paper Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>333</td>
<td>Chemical Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>334</td>
<td>Plastics and Rubber Product Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>335</td>
<td>Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>336</td>
<td>Primary Metal Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>337</td>
<td>Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>338</td>
<td>Machinery Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>339</td>
<td>Transportation Equipment Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employer’s Needs

The data that was provided to each of Illinois’ regional planning teams is directly linked to labor market information. The Illinois Pathway’s website (www.illinoispathways.com) is a highlighted resource that outlines education and career pathways leading to career options that require similar skills and preparation. The Illinois Pathways website allows the users to research groupings of careers, labor market information, and the knowledge, skills, abilities and credentials that are required for each occupation. Illinois will build on this tool and update the information as a part of the WIOA career pathway and sector strategies. Business engagement is critical to verify that this information accurately reflects the employer’s needs.

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

One of the key strategies of Illinois Pathways was to launch and support statewide, public-private partnerships in identified high-growth, STEM-related industry sectors, known as STEM Learning Exchanges. The STEM Learning Exchanges align sector-based supports from business, non-profit organizations, private funding organizations and government entities. These Learning Exchanges have focused on: a) advising regions on career pathway system structure and best practices in a particular sector; b) delivering high quality curricular and professional development resources; and c) expanding access to real world challenges and work-based learning.

Built on longstanding strengths in Illinois, particularly in CTE Programs of Study, Illinois Pathways addresses two goals: first, to increase the number of Illinoisans who attain a postsecondary credential and are prepared for employment in high-demand, high-wage occupations; and second, to spur state and regional economic development by developing a homegrown talent pipeline for areas of workforce need. Illinois Pathways provides specific information regarding the knowledge, skills and abilities that are required for each occupation in each industry sector. A sample occupational profile that was downloaded from www.illinoispathways.com is outlined below. Illinois’ regional planning process directs the workforce, education and economic development partners to validate, refine and expand the occupational profile information with the help of businesses in the key industry sectors. This process will continue as the State of Illinois and the regions develop and implement their sector strategy initiatives.
Industrial machinery mechanics maintain and repair factory equipment and other machinery.

**Wages:** Earn $54,482 per year

**Ten Year Growth:** Much faster than average

**Annual Openings:** Very High

**Preparation**

An industrial machinery mechanic typically needs to:

- Have a high school diploma or equivalent
- Complete an long-term, on-the-job training

**Working Conditions**

In a typical work setting, industrial machinery mechanics:

- Have a low to medium level of social interaction. They often have discussions with machine operators, but also work alone.
- Often work indoors.
- Must be exact in their work and be sure all details are done. Errors could result in injuries to machine operators.
- Work at least 40 hours per week. Schedules are generally established.

**Industrial Machinery Mechanics - Knowledge**

Industrial machinery mechanics need knowledge in the following areas:

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

**Industrial Machinery Mechanics - Skills and Abilities**

Industrial machinery mechanics need to:

**Communicate**

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

Reason and Problem Solve

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

Manage Oneself, People, Time and Things

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

Work with People

• Change behavior in relation to others’ actions.

Work with Things

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

Perceive and Visualize

• Imagine how something will look if it is moved around or its parts are rearranged.

EXAMPLE OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE FROM ILLINOIS PATHWAYS

Licensed Practical Nurses - At a Glance

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

Wages: Earn $45,869 per year

Ten Year Growth: Faster than average
Annual Openings: Very High

Preparation

A licensed practical nurse typically needs to:

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

Working Conditions

In a typical work setting, licensed practical nurses:

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

Licensed Practical Nurses - Knowledge

Licensed practical nurses need knowledge in the following areas:

- Customer and Personal Service: Providing special services to customers based on their needs.
- Psychology: People, their actions and mental processes and how to treat problems.
- English Language: The meaning and use of the English language.
- Therapy and Counseling: The mental or physical problems and methods for treatment.
- Mathematics: The rules and uses of numbers.
- Education and Training: The methods of teaching and learning.
- Administration and Management: How to run a business or group.
- Chemistry: The properties of substances and the changes that occur when they interact.
- Public Safety and Security: How to protect people and property.
- Sociology and Anthropology: Where people come from and how they behave.
- Clerical: General office work such as filling and storing information.

Licensed Practical Nurses - Skills and Abilities

Licensed practical nurses need to:

Communicate

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

Reason and Problem Solve

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

Manage Oneself, People, Time and Things

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

Work with People

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

Perceive and Visualize

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

B. WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

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

I. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

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

II. LABOR MARKET TRENDS

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

III. EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE

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

IV. SKILL GAPS

Describe apparent ‘skill gaps’.

WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

LABOR FORCE SIZE AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Illinois labor force in the 25-54 age group has declined almost 200,000 (-4.4%) between 2009 and 2014, according the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey estimates. This is a result of the shrinking population in that age group. Smaller declines occurred in the 16-19 and 20-24 age groups. During that same period the labor force in the 55-64 age groups increased over 135,000 (+12.6%). As the overall population gets older, the available labor force in Illinois will likely continue to decline.

Employment and Unemployment

Unemployment rates for the 16-19 age groups are much higher than the rate for all ages, but especially high for African-Americans, Hispanics, and the “other” race category. Part of this discrepancy for racial/ethnic groups may be related to living in areas where few appropriate job matches are available. Unemployment rates are lowest among Caucasians for the 16-19, 20-24, and 70+ age groups, while Asians have the lowest rates for the 25-54, 55-64, and 65-69 groupings. Overall, unemployment rates have dropped between 2009 and 2014. This is in line with a stronger overall economy in 2014 relative to 2009.

While unemployment rates for youth (age 16-19) are high, the rates for older workers (65+) have remained low. This is likely a result of many older individuals leaving the labor force after separation from work (voluntarily or involuntarily). Other targeted populations include veterans, single parent families (headed by either a male or female), and the disabled. The unemployment rate for all veterans remains below the rates for the entire population. However, the rate for veterans in the 18-
34 age groups is significantly higher than the overall state average. This group of veterans is the most likely to have been recently discharged and thus the most likely to still be in transition to civilian employment. Rates for single parent families are high for both male and female heads of households, but especially high for females. Rates for the disabled are higher than any other group except for youth. Attachment C (http://www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan) provides additional demographic details regarding the Illinois labor force, employment and unemployment during this period.

**Labor Market Trends**

Between 2004 and 2014, U.S. employment shifts occurred among industry sectors with a reduction in goods-producing industries in favor of service-producing industries. This shift is a continuation of a long term trend as manufacturing employment has declined due to both strong productivity gains in high-value added industries and offshoring of low-value added production to lower cost economies. Construction employment decreased as a share of total employment in 2014 relative to 2004, when the housing bubble was still in its nascent period. Among goods-producing industries in the U.S., mining and logging was the only sector to show marked improvement between 2004 and 2014 as oil production surged during the period with a greater number of oil-producing states with growth in the fracking industry.

As shown in Table 7, in the Midwest states (IL, IN, IA, KY, MI, MN, MO, OH and WI), none showed significant gains in its industry shares towards mining and logging. Only Kentucky experienced a reduction in employment activity as a share of its industry mix. On the construction front, Midwest states weakened as much as the United States or more, except for Iowa, which ticked up just a bit in its industry mix towards construction. In the Midwest, the real story lies in the manufacturing sector. Midwest manufacturing employment accounts for about one-third of national manufacturing employment. All of the states in the Midwest (as well as the national average) recorded a drop in their share of manufacturing employment as a share of the total industry sector mix. Illinois, Kentucky and Michigan saw roughly the same reduction in their manufacturing employment shares as the nation. Indiana, Ohio and Missouri saw a greater reduction in their manufacturing shares, while Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin saw a smaller reduction in their manufacturing employment share in the 10 years spanning 2004-2014.
Table 7: Distribution of Industry Employment in the U.S. and Midwest: Regional Similarities and Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>US</th>
<th>IL</th>
<th>IN</th>
<th>IA</th>
<th>KY</th>
<th>MI</th>
<th>MN</th>
<th>MO</th>
<th>OH</th>
<th>WI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mining and Logging</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade/Transportation/Utilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans, Warehousing and Utilities</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Activities</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and Business Services</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational and Health Services</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and Hospitality</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Decline from 2004
- No Change from 2004
- Growth from 2004
It is no surprise that manufacturing employment has declined in the Midwest as well as the United States overall following long-term trends of improved productivity combined with offshoring to low-cost economies. Many people are surprised to learn that the demand for manufacturing employment remains strong due to replacement needs. As baby boomers retire in Illinois, the Midwest and across the nation, employers will need to backfill positions so that manufacturing occupations remain in demand locally and across Illinois. The share of manufacturing employment as a portion of total employment is highest in Indiana and Wisconsin. Iowa, Michigan, Ohio and Kentucky also have a high share of manufacturing employment.

While manufacturing is a key industry in all Midwest states, Illinois’ share is smaller than its neighbors; in fact, Illinois’ share of manufacturing employment is more closely aligned to the national average. However, Illinois is the largest state in the Midwest and, consequently, its actual level of manufacturing employment is larger than each of the other states in the region with the exception of Ohio (based on 2014 data). Demand for manufacturing occupations remains healthy in Illinois and will continue to compete with its neighbors for skilled workers.

Among trade, transportation and utilities, all states (including the national average) saw a reduction of the share of employment in the retail trade sector, and the majority also saw a reduction in wholesale trade (with the exception of Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin). The majority of states (as well as the national average) saw an increase of their share of employment in the transportation, warehousing and utilities sector. Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky and Iowa have a larger share of their employment in this industry sector than the nation.

Professional and business services grew across the region, although all states except Illinois have a smaller share of their employment in this industry sector. In contrast, Illinois’ share of employment in professional and business services is larger than the national average. Professional services include accounting, legal, architecture and engineering, computer design and management consulting as well as business headquarters. Business services include temporary help agencies (with a wide variety of occupational needs), waste management services, business support services and investigation and security services.

Educational and health services showed an increased share of employment in the United States and among Midwest states, including Illinois. Occupations related to health care industries as well as education will be in demand across the region as Midwest states may end up competing for workers in these occupational fields.

The leisure and hospitality sector drew a greater share of employment in the nation than in any of the Midwest states, although Illinois’ share of employment in this industry sector grew more than any other Midwest state. On the whole, Midwest states have a smaller share of employment in this industry sector than the nation.

The information sector saw a reduced share of employment in all states and the national average. Financial activities employment also was a smaller share of employment in all states (except Iowa and Kentucky, where it had a greater share from 2004 to 2014). Chart 1, based on Table 7, provides a graphic representation of this analysis.

Charts 2-4 show how the industry distribution has changed over the last decade, with data shown for 2004, 2009 and 2014.
Chart 1: 2014 Employment Distribution by Industry as Share of Total Nonfarm Payrolls

- Government
- Other Services
- Leisure and Hospitality
- Educational and Health Services
- Professional and Business Services
- Financial Activities
- Information
- T/T/U-Trans, Warehousing and Utilities
- T/T/U-Retail Trade
- T/T/U-Wholesale Trade
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Mining and Logging

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>US</th>
<th>Illinois</th>
<th>Midwest Avg (w/out IL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and Hospitality</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational and Health Services</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and Business Services</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Activities</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T/T/U-Trans, Warehousing and Utilities</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T/T/U-Retail Trade</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T/T/U-Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and Logging</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 2: UNITED STATES
Employment Distribution by Industry
as Share of Total Nonfarm Payrolls 2004, 2009, 2014
Chart 3: ILLINOIS
Employment Distribution by Industry
as Share of Total Nonfarm Payrolls 2004, 2009, 2014
Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

Occupational skill requirements are increasing across the workforce due to a myriad of factors, including the increasing pace of technological change and the increasingly global nature of the economy. In its most recent set of occupational employment projections, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (USBLS) shows the increasing need for advanced education and training to qualify for occupations with the highest growth rates (http://www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan).
Moreover, the education and skill requirements of occupations are directly related to the earning power of those occupations, as evidenced by Illinois data from the 2014 American Community Survey (http://www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan).
These data sets highlight the importance and the value of increased educational attainment and degrees. For Illinois to compete in this globalized, technology-charged economy, we must train our workforce to meet the challenges of these increasing education and skill requirements. Since the turn of the century, Illinois has made progress in increasing the overall educational attainment of its population. However, the number of individuals with low literacy skills has remained a significant concern in meeting the demand for an educated and skilled workforce (http://www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan).
The percentage of Illinois' population (age 25+) with some type of post-secondary degree increased from 32% in 2000 to over 39% in 2014. However, this number is still too low. Illinois has committed to ensuring that 60% of the state’s population has a high quality degree or credential by 2025, an initiative referred to as 60 by 2025. As this data shows, the state is clearly moving towards that goal, but there is still a long way to go in the next decade. Illinois’ continued economic and income growth is dependent on reaching the 60 by 2025 goal (http://www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan).
There are approximately 850,000 persons in Illinois that lack of English proficiency. Over 700,000 people have some high school education but do not have a diploma, and nearly 500,000 people have less than a 9th grade education. These individuals could benefit from a variety of workforce and adult education programs, especially bridge programs that incorporate English, reading and math skills contextualized for a targeted industry.

Chart 8: Target Population Characteristics

- IL Residents that Do Not Speak English Well (DNSEW) – Ages 16+: 520,863
- IL Immigrants Ages 16+: 331,368
- IL Residents with more than 9th grade, but less than 12 grade education: 718,080
- Residents with less than a 9th grade education: 470,138
Skill Gap Analysis

During recent years, a number of projects and studies have been undertaken to examine the issue of "skill gaps" within major industry sectors in Illinois (or significant portions of Illinois). What follows is a brief synopsis of the findings of these studies within each of three major industry sectors: manufacturing, health care and transportation distribution and logistics (TDL).

Manufacturing

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

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

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

While much of the manufacturing skills gaps dialogue has focused on technical skills, the challenge of finding employees may extend beyond technical competencies. Manufacturing employees also must have so-called "essential/soft skills" such as literacy, numeracy, reliability, problem solving and the ability to work in teams. The “CMAP Manufacturing Drill-Down Report” (http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/69902/FY13-0073%20MANUFACTURING%20CLUSTER%20DRILLDOWN%20FINAL%20lowres.pdf/68caa550-1cd1-4df0-b61c-c796702a7684) indicates that firms throughout the region have reported being unable to find sufficient workers with these skills. Downstate manufacturers and those in more rural areas face similar and often greater challenges in filling their vacancies due to an aging workforce, outmigration of younger residents and smaller labor pools.

Health Care

In September 2014, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) accepted a report (https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/DownloadPrint/HCTF%20Final%20Report.pdf) developed by its Health Care Task Force, consisting of IWIB business leaders and health care educators and practitioners. This report examined the workforce implications of issues regarding the implementation of new public health and coordinated, community-based healthcare delivery models in Illinois. These new models are being implemented in response to changing population and patient needs, federal and state healthcare reforms, and innovations in delivery models, professional practices and technology.
These new models place stronger emphasis on prevention and primary care and use professional and paraprofessional healthcare workers in new roles with different skill requirements.

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

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

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

**Transportation, Distribution & Logistics (TDL)**

In June 2015, JP Morgan Chase and Jobs for the Future released a report called “Growing Skills for a Growing Chicago” (https://www.jpmorganchase.com/corporate/Corporate-Responsibility/document/54841-jpmc-gap-chicago-aw3-v2-accessible.pdf), which sought to develop “data-driven solutions to address the mismatch between employer needs and the skills of current job seekers”. In terms of TDL, the report found that there is a strong and ongoing demand for what it terms “middle-skill” jobs - jobs that require more than a high school credential but less than a bachelor’s degree, such as a diesel mechanic or supply chain specialist. The Chicago metro area creates more than 5,000 of these middle-skill jobs in TDL each year, but the need for an associate’s degree or credentialing is often the source of the skill gap. To close that gap, the report outlines a series of recommendations, including the widespread institution of TDL-specific talent pipeline solutions that will increase the feedback loop between employers and training providers. The IWIB also reconstituted the TDL Task Force in 2015 and charged it with developing recommendations and strategies for developing the needed TDL workforce in all areas of Illinois. In this sector, retention is as significant a challenge as talent pipeline management.
2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

ANALYSIS

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

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

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

STATE OF ILLINOIS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

The Illinois Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Unified State Plan is designed to provide a vision of the Governor’s integration of workforce, education and economic development policy while also serving as a federal compliance document for the United States Departments of Labor and Education under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The Unified State Plan outlines the vision, principles and goals for the integration of workforce, education and economic development programs for the State of Illinois (state).

State Workforce System

The Governor, State Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) and WIOA core partners including the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce), the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security), the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) determined that the state will submit a Unified State Plan. The state has developed this Unified State Plan with the intent to integrate the programs listed below (including the non-core programs) into the strategies outlined in the Unified State Plan.

- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
- Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs
- Employment and Training under the Community Services Block Grant Program
- Trade Act Programs
- Regional Economic Development
- Illinois Community College Board
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
- Career and Technical Education Programs at the postsecondary level authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006
- Illinois Department of Employment Security
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Services including Labor Market Information
- Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers Monitor Advocate System
- Veterans Employment and Training Services
- Unemployment Insurance Services
• Trade Adjustment Assistance
• Illinois Department of Human Services
• Rehabilitation Services for Individuals with Disabilities
• Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
• Illinois Department on Aging
• Senior Community Services Employment Program
• Illinois Department of Corrections
• Section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007
• Nationally Directed - Locally Administered Programs
• National Farmworker Jobs Program
• YouthBuild
• Job Corps

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Commerce is the state agency that leads economic development efforts for Illinois and is responsible for the WIOA Title IB activities. Key program activities include distributing WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth formula funds, Trade Act funds and National Emergency Grants to 22 Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs), monitoring the local areas' use of WIOA funds, and providing technical assistance to local areas. Commerce is responsible for the administration of the required and allowed Governor’s Statewide Workforce Activities as outlined in WIOA. Commerce issues formal guidance to the local areas through policy letters and notices designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. Commerce also provides staff support to the IWIB and its committees and ad hoc task forces. As part of the Bureau of Community Development, Commerce also oversees the employment and training programs under the Community Services Block Grant Program.

Illinois Community College Board

The ICCB has the responsibility of overseeing Title II activities under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. Services provided include, but are not limited to, assessment, basic skills instruction, English language acquisition instruction, high school equivalency instruction, career awareness, workforce preparation, online instruction, bridge programs as well as accelerated education and training programs. Currently, there are 86 providers of adult education and family literacy in Illinois that consist of community colleges, community based organizations, regional offices of education and other approved providers. The mission and vision of adult education is to provide every individual in Illinois access to adult education and literacy services. In Illinois, more than 1.7 million adults have less than 12 grades of formal education, approximately 2.6 million Illinois residents speak a language other than English in their home, and more than 552,000 immigrants reside in Illinois. ICCB seeks to prepare adult learners to compete for jobs of the present and the future. To accomplish this it is necessary to build a system that is education, training and workforce focused.

Illinois has seen continued growth and demand for postsecondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) in both higher completion rates and increased program offerings. Last year roughly two-thirds (66.9%) of all Illinois community college graduates earned a CTE degree or certificate and 615 new CTE programs were approved to meet workforce demands. In Illinois, federal Perkins Title I funds are divided 60/40 between the secondary and post-secondary career and technical education systems where administration is shared between the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and ICCB.
The 57 Education for Employment (EFE) regions receive funds from ISBE to support secondary CTE programs, and the 39 community college districts receive funds from ICCB to support post-secondary CTE programs.

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) is the most important piece of legislation affecting career and technical education (CTE) in Illinois. Perkins IV focuses state and local efforts on continuously improving programs to facilitate the academic achievement of CTE students by: strengthening the connections between secondary and post-secondary education; restructuring the way stakeholders, high schools, community colleges, universities, business and parents work together; and increasing state and local accountability standards. The intent of Illinois post-secondary CTE is to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in the global economy. Career and technical education equips students with the foundational knowledge to explore a cluster of occupations and careers. As a student evolves through their educational experience, their focus is narrowed to a particular program. This process allows students to transition seamlessly while providing them with hands-on exploration, rigorous academics and the support necessary to succeed.

**Illinois Department of Employment Security**

Employment Security is responsible for administering Title III activities for employment services under the Wagner-Peyser Act. The intent of Wagner-Peyser services is to sustain economic growth by meeting the needs of job seekers, increase awareness of resource providers and expand employment opportunities. Services offered include assessments for job placement, job search assistance and online job application processing. Employment Security is responsible for increasing community awareness about the services provided via job fairs, community collaborations, onsite recruitments, resource linkage and presentations. Additionally, Employment Security is responsible for labor market and career information in Illinois through cooperative agreements with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to provide statewide and sub-state employment, unemployment, occupation, wage information and statewide and sub-state industry and occupational employment projections. These data products serve as the cornerstone for the Career Information System, a web-based tool for students and job seekers to identify Illinois' in-demand jobs and make informed choices about future career pathways.

**Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services**

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) administers Title IV activities and is the state’s lead agency serving individuals with disabilities. DRS works in partnership with individuals with disabilities and their families to assist them in making informed choices to achieve full community participation through employment, education and independent living opportunities. The primary focus of the vocational rehabilitation program is to assist individuals with significant disabilities in obtaining and retaining competitive integrated employment. Vocational rehabilitation services are designed to prepare an individual for employment through an individualized planning process.

The Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Family & Community Services is also the state administrator of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. DHS operates Family Community Resource Centers statewide serving TANF customers, linking them to time-limited cash assistance for basic needs, transitional services to help families become independent and screening for issues related to substance abuse, mental health and domestic violence, as well as referrals to address those issues. Employment and Training activities under TANF include assisting qualified individuals in applying for cash assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
Program (SNAP) benefits and medical assistance; evaluating and assessing eligibility for work and training programs; and evaluating eligibility for supportive services, such as transportation and child care. Each TANF and SNAP customer who is engaged in workforce development services receives such services according to a responsibility and services plan.

The Department of Human Services’ Division of Family & Community Services will have a strong presence in Comprehensive One-Stop Centers and is committed to increasing workforce engagement with collaborative partnerships to achieve employment opportunities for all adults served by DHS. Casework staff will develop a services plan for TANF and SNAP recipients connecting them to career pathways opportunities offered in each Comprehensive One-Stop Center. Casework staff will connect customers in need of barrier reductions services at the Comprehensive One-Stop Centers and connect them to services offered by DHS such as mental health, substance abuse and child care. Supportive services will be provided to participants as per policy guidelines.

**Illinois Department on Aging**

The mission of the Illinois Department on Aging (Aging) is to serve and advocate for older Illinoisans and their caregivers by administering quality and culturally appropriate programs that promote partnerships and encourage independence, dignity and quality of life. In accordance with the federal Older American’s Act (http://www.illinois.gov/aging/AboutUs/Pages/rules-main.aspx) regulations, Aging has divided Illinois into 13 Planning and Service Areas (PSAs). The 13 PSAs in Illinois are each managed and served by an Area Agency on Aging. Aging works in partnership with these agencies: 12 not-for-profit corporations and one unit of local government, the City of Chicago. Area Agencies on Aging (Area Agencies) have the primary task of planning and coordinating services and programs for older people in their respective areas. The Area Agencies receive funding from Aging based on a formula which takes into consideration the number of older citizens and minorities in that area, as well as the number living in poverty, in rural areas and alone. Like Aging, Area Agencies are not, as a rule, direct service providers. Area Agencies contract with local agencies which provide services to the older citizens who live in the same community.

The role of Aging under WIOA is to ensure the needs of older workers and job seekers are considered so that these individuals remain employed for as long as they wish. Age is often a barrier to finding employment, and Aging’s resources can be leveraged to help older citizens find and retain employment. As a partner program, Aging has the role of administering the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) under Title V of the Older Americans Act. The SCSEP program provides on-the-job training and resources/referrals for all individuals 55+ years of age that will ultimately lead to unsubsidized employment.

**Illinois Department of Corrections**

The mission of the Illinois Department of Corrections ( Corrections) is to serve justice in Illinois and increase public safety by promoting positive change in offender behavior, operating successful reentry programs and reducing victimization. Corrections administers the Second Chance Act Program, which allows governments and communities to coordinate reentry efforts, enhance existing housing and support services, engage in evidence-based practices and create innovative strategies that will serve the growing needs of this population, ultimately increasing public safety and reducing recidivism.
Nationally Directed/Locally Administered Programs

There are a number of nationally directed workforce programs that are administered in some of the regions and LWIAs in Illinois. These programs, where present, will be included in the regional and local workforce plans.

National Farmworker Jobs Program

The National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) provides employment and training services that are targeted to migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs). The program partners with community organizations and state agencies to counter the chronic unemployment and underemployment experienced by farmworkers who depend primarily on jobs in agricultural labor performed across the country. NFJP partnered with the state monitor advocate to provide outreach services to farmworkers and their families. NFJP provides career services and training to eligible farmworkers, and coordinates with the One-Stop Delivery System. The National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grant awards are determined by a formula that estimates, by state, the relative demand for NFJP services.

YouthBuild

The US Department of Labor grants funds directly to the local YouthBuild program through an annual competitive process. YouthBuild is a community-based alternative education program that provides job training and educational opportunities for at-risk youth ages 16-24. Youth learn construction skills while constructing or rehabilitating affordable housing for low-income or homeless families in their own neighborhoods. Youth split their time between the construction site and the classroom, where they earn their GED or high school diploma, learn to be community leaders, and prepare for college and other post-secondary training opportunities. YouthBuild includes significant support systems, such as mentoring, follow-up education, employment and personal counseling services; and participation in community service and civic engagement.

Job Corps

Job Corps is an education and vocational training program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that helps young people ages 16 through 24 improve the quality of their lives through vocational and academic training. Job Corps’ mission is to attract eligible young people, teach them the skills they need to become employable and independent and place them in meaningful jobs or further education. Job Corps centers are operated for the U.S. Department of Labor by private companies through competitive contracting processes, and by other federal agencies through interagency agreements. For more information regarding the Job Corps Program in Illinois please visit: [http://www.jobcorps.gov/centers/il.aspx](http://www.jobcorps.gov/centers/il.aspx)

State Workforce Activities

Workforce development, education and training activities in Illinois have been transforming for some time. This transformation will accelerate as WIOA is fully implemented across partner programs at the local, state and regional levels. Illinois has strongly advocated and supported aligning efforts to demand industries, occupations and skills. The intent is to deliberately link education and training to the skills identified by businesses, ensuring that program completers have those skills when entering the workforce.
Additionally, comprehensive career services that enable individuals to make informed decisions on education and training opportunities that maximize their potential for successful and rewarding careers are being promoted.

The state will work to develop policies and incentives to support the strategies and activities as outlined in Chapter 7 of the full version of the Unified State Plan. Based on experience with interagency initiatives such as the Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing Program, bridge programs and other initiatives, Illinois is making a deliberate shift to increase the use of contextualized learning and work-based training while moving away from a one-size-fits-all mentality of service delivery.

Vision Statement: Promote business-driven talent solutions that integrate education, workforce and economic development resources across systems to provide businesses, individuals, and communities with the opportunity to prosper and contribute to growing the state’s economy.

Guiding Principles: Illinois will work toward achieving the vision using these principles as guideposts for policy development and program service delivery. Each partner will use its resources to support the following principles:

- Business demand driven orientation through a sector strategy framework
- Strong partnerships with business at all levels
- Career pathways to jobs of today and tomorrow
- Integrated service delivery
- Access and opportunity for all populations
- Cross-agency collaboration and alignment for developing and/or promoting career pathways and industry recognized stackable credentials
- Clear metrics for progress and success
- Focus on continuous improvement and innovation

State Goals: The partners will collectively use the following goals to support Illinois' vision to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development strategies at the state, regional and local levels to improve the economic growth and competitiveness of the state’s employers and their workforce.

- Foster improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors that are the engine of economic growth for the state and its regions.
- Expand career pathway opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings.
- Expand career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services and expansion of bridge programs.
- Expand information for employers and job seekers to access services by improving the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development and education initiatives for supporting sector partnerships and career pathways.

State Strategies and Highlighted Activities: Illinois will explore a variety of strategies for the implementation of these principles and goals with a focus on improving community prosperity.
through more competitive businesses and workers. These strategies and highlighted activities include:

- Coordinate Demand-Driven Strategic Planning at the State and Regional Levels
- Providing data and tools to support regional planning to align education, workforce and economic development strategies.
- Developing a state and regional cross-agency benchmark report for stakeholders and the public.
- Support Employer-Driven Regional Sector Initiatives
- Conducting outreach to regional and local economic development organizations to improve regional collaboration in economic development planning.
- Aligning and integrating business and job seeker services among the programs along with state and regional economic development partners.
- Provide Career Pathways for Economic Advancement
- Exploring ways to fully mainstream targeted populations into sector-based career pathway initiatives to achieve outcomes similar to other populations (see Section on “Targeted Populations”).
- Creating new pathways for success by preparing low-skill adults to take advantage of sector-based bridge programs.
- Coordinate and Enhance Career Services and Case Management
- Establishing case management teams to coordinate and support the delivery of enhanced case management services to participants across programs.
- Promoting continuous improvement in career services and case management through the identification of best practice models and incentivizing demonstration projects.
- Expand Access to Labor Market Information
- Improving access to labor market information for employers and job seekers that will allow them to promote and access job openings, review changing labor market trends, and identify education and training programs.
- Supporting awareness and adoption of innovative private sector models, such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Talent Pipeline Management Initiative.
- Improve Public-Private Data Infrastructure
- Working with core partners and the State Chief Information Officer to develop a framework of how to integrate state intake, case management and reporting systems.
- Expanding and improving the state education and workforce longitudinal data system to support the six strategies.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Comment

The State of Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) is responsible for overseeing the development, implementation and modification of the Unified State Plan and for convening all relevant programs, required partners and stakeholders. The state agencies responsible for the administration of the core and required programs have reviewed and commented on appropriate operational planning portion of the Unified State Plan. Illinois' Unified State Plan was released for public comment on January 25, 2016 to allow interested stakeholders to participate in the development of the plan. The comments to the Unified State Plan can be viewed in Attachment A (https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/wioa/stateplan).
B. THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

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

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

This section provides a snapshot of Illinois’ strengths and weaknesses of the workforce system. Core partners collaboratively identified the strengths and weaknesses as part of the unified planning process and as part of the ongoing efforts to better align and integrate service delivery consistent with the state’s vision, principles, goals and strategies, as discussed in Chapter 4 of the full version of the Unified State Plan.

Illinois’ Current Strengths in the Alignment between Core Partners and Other Required Partners. The following summarizes key strengths of Illinois’ workforce system as identified by core partners:

- The state encourages innovation.
- Pockets of regional innovation are developing.
- State and local partners have recent experience in work-based learning due to National Emergency Grants and Workforce Innovation Fund grants.
- State partners continue to work collaboratively and explore opportunities for service alignment.
- The state has provided technical assistance on employer engagement, sector strategies, work-based learning, labor market information and best practice models on serving special target populations.
- The state is pursuing innovation in providing services to individuals with disabilities.
- The state is encouraging the use of lean principles in workforce development programs.
- There are examples of effective business-led regional sector partnerships that exist and that can be leveraged as models for the rest of the state (i.e., Vermilion Advantage) (http://www.vermilionadvantage.com/).
- Illinois has been successful in administering innovative education and training initiatives, such as Accelerating Opportunity Integrated Education and Training and Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing.

Illinois has initiated and continues numerous activities that engage core and required partner representatives at the state and local levels. Many strong partnerships already exist, with ideas and room for further alignment and expansion during WIOA implementation. The following programs and initiatives illustrate Illinois’ strength in aligning and integrating workforce and education programs.

ILLINOIS PATHWAYS

Illinois Pathways is an innovative public-private education partnership that is organized to support local implementation of P-20 Council STEM Programs of Study by coordinating and reducing the transaction cost among statewide networks of education partners, businesses, industry associations, labor organizations and other organizations. Education and career pathways are an integrated collection of programs and services intended to develop students’ core academic, technical and employability skills; provide them with continuous education and training; and place them in high-demand, high-opportunity jobs. Illinois Pathways builds off of the National Career Clusters® Framework and supports career pathway systems in STEM application areas.
The pathways are a basis for clusters of specific occupations or careers grouped together because they share similar interests, strengths and skills. More information regarding Illinois Pathways is posted at www.illinoispathways.com.

ACCESS TO ACTIVITIES LEADING TO RECOGNIZED POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

The State of Illinois is dedicated to ensuring that all students have access to rigorous and relevant educational opportunities that prepares them for success in college and careers. Illinois Career and Technical Education (CTE) provide students with the academic and technical skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century knowledge and skills-based economy. Students participating in these programs are held to specific and reliable industry-based learning standards to ensure that they are fully prepared for both postsecondary education and the high-wage, high-skill and high-demand career of their choice.

A key to a robust career pathways system is that portable, stackable credentials are incorporated fully into the system, particularly at the postsecondary level. Fortunately, in Illinois, the incorporation of portable, stackable credentials have been an ongoing commitment of the postsecondary career and technical education system since the implementation of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act (Perkins IV).

The ICCB recognized that CTE students at a community college do not always fit the model of transition implied in the Perkins IV definition. Thus, the agency moved early to adopt a more holistic career pathways approach to implementation. For example, the ICCB CTE division partnered with Adult Education to develop an Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS). The purpose is to provide integrated CTE and Adult Education instruction, so adult students can earn at least one “stackable,” credit-bearing, post-secondary education credential as well as industry recognized credentials that lead to high-wage employment in Illinois. In integrated programs career and technical educators teach integrated classes alongside adult education instructors, ensuring that students receive not only integrated curriculum inclusive of basic skills enhancements, but also curriculum tied to the latest in industry standards developed in partnership with employers.

Community colleges, four-year colleges and universities in Illinois play a key role in helping residents pursue credentials that will help them access high-skill, high-wage jobs. Partnerships with high schools ensure graduates are college-ready, and dual credit opportunities, transfer assistance, recognition for prior learning, and other innovative approaches help learners, particularly low-income individuals, move through the P-20 pipeline.

PATHWAYS TO RESULTS INITIATIVE (PTR)

In Perkins IV, effective partnerships are viewed as essential to help all students meet college and career readiness expectations (Nicholson-Tosh & Kirby, 2013 http://occrl.illinois.edu/files/Projects/ptr/Modules/PTR%20Module%201.pdf). One of the most effective ways in which the post-secondary CTE system has modeled good partnerships in Illinois is through the implementation of the Pathways to Results (PTR) initiative. An effort led by the Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, PTR has been utilized in over 100 post-secondary CTE programs across the state. PTR is an outcome-focused process, guided by equity considerations and targeting the improvement of pathways and policies that support the transition of students into post-secondary education.
Within the context of PTR, community colleges must fully and completely engage both internal and external stakeholders in their career pathways work. To do this, colleges are encouraged to develop partnerships based upon sound principles—setting goals and outcomes, defining the structure of governance, identifying a strategy for operation, evaluating success and considering sustainability. Stakeholders representing all sectors of industry and education should be at the table under the PTR model. By way of example, PTR is a five-step continuous quality improvement process. During phase one, partners are at the center of the phase and thus provide a perfect model for fully engaging partners to pursue other resources. Among the elements required as a part of this first phase are the identification and engagement of leaders that support the improvement of pathways or programs of study, including secondary, post-secondary, business and industry, adult education, workforce development, community-based organizations and others and who guide P-20 education systems change. PTR is an excellent model to utilize for the purpose of leveraging resources in order to provide enhanced access to workforce development programs at the states’ community colleges and across post-secondary CTE programs.

BRIDGE PROGRAMS

The goal of bridge programs is to sequentially bridge the gap between the initial skills of individuals and what they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and career-path employment. The state’s bridge programs prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in post-secondary education and training leading to career-path employment in demand occupations as identified by the local labor market information. Illinois has had a unified bridge definition between the community college system and the workforce since 2010. Bridge programs must be built on the criteria below to be an approved program in the state.

- The delivery of bridge programs does not have to be through an eligible training provider with a certified training program; they may be provided by: o An approved and funded Adult Education program; o The credit or non-credit department(s) of a community college; or o Community-based organization (CBO) or other type of provider that offers non-credit workforce training.
- Training programs may be offered by a single entity (e.g., a community college or a CBO) or by a partnership (e.g., a CBO and a community college). Regardless of the provider, they: o May provide opportunities to earn college credit (such as through escrow credit accounts); o May offer dual enrollment in credit and non-credit programs; or o May offer a multi-level program that moves people from an adult education course offered by one provider to a non-credit occupational course offered by the same or another provider.
- All bridge program providers must use pre-skill assessments consistent with program requirements to place students into the appropriate courses as well as post-skill assessments to measure progress.

All providers will use data tracking systems to collect and analyze key information about bridge program participants and graduates.

Under WIOA, the partners will update and enhance the current bridge definition policy by engaging Title I, Title II, and college credit leaders and providers to learn what is working with the current policy and what could be adjusted to ensure that bridge programs are more widely implemented across Illinois. Any new policy developed around the bridge definition and model will cut across all four core partner programs to ensure services are maximized for the students in the adult education programs. Furthermore, information garnered from the review of the definition, will inform new initiatives that promote sector-based pre-bridge and bridge activities, enhance and expand bridge
programs offerings, and align with core partner WIOA requirements. The focus will be to expand access and success in these sector-based bridge programs across all WIOA partners, as a way to braid funding to ensure an integrated approach to service. As the leader in the development of bridge programs for Illinois, ICCB will use their lessons learned to help expand the program model across partners.

LABOR MARKET DATA

All core partners use a common set of labor market information data produced by Employment Security, including but not limited to, industry and occupational employment projections. The data team from the core partners worked together to compile a list of occupations that are in-demand, based on regional needs, a list which will be continuously updated as occupational demand evolves in each region. Maintenance of the demand occupation list leads to the identification of the key occupational competencies required by businesses, which in turn will lead to adjustments by training providers to ensure students leaving programs are ready to be productive as they enter the workforce.

WORK-BASED LEARNING INITIATIVES AND TRAINING ROUNDTABLES

Work-based learning (WBL) provides more opportunities for workers to earn income while gaining critical job skills. To prepare for the WIOA requirements, the state has coordinated a number of roundtable events over the last two years highlighting the importance of work-based learning, with a specific emphasis on using these training strategies to support industry sector initiatives. Additional technical assistance will provide the opportunity to institutionalize best practices and expand the impact of WBL employers, job seekers and the workforce system. There are a number of programs and initiatives that support work-based learning in Illinois including:

- WIOA requires a minimum of 20 percent of youth funding to be dedicated to work-based learning.
- Illinois’ $6.1 million 2014 Job Driven and $4 million Sector-Based National Emergency Grants focus on work-based learning strategies.
- Illinois was awarded three projects totaling $9.3 million as part of the $175 American Apprenticeship initiative.
- The Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing Program has resulted in a number of best practices, including the blending of traditional occupational training and work-based learning strategies, as well as providing valuable experience in cross-program collaboration for client recruitment and intake, case management, training, supportive services and job placement.
- Illinois agencies have a strong track record of partnering with other agencies on implementing summer employment opportunities to provide youth with work experience that is linked to work-readiness training and career pathways.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESSIBILITY

The disability community is on the forefront of technology, which makes it vital to stay up-to-date with technology statewide, especially when implementing new information systems (e.g., ensuring systems are compatible with screen readers, speech recognition, etc.). The Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) Technology Section houses experts in the field of technology accessibility. Technical assistance is provided by this unit to other state agencies. For example, website design accessibility is incredibly important, especially in portions of the state where public transportation is limited.
If a request is made by another agency in the delivery system for assistance with accessibility to technology or a program, a DRS employee will assist. DHS notes that the most requested accommodations are for computer accessibility for individuals who are visually impaired and individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

BUSINESS SERVICE COORDINATION

DRS is working with Commerce on the development of a business engagement strategy as part of a national technical assistance effort funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute for Community Inclusion. This effort is focused on engaging businesses throughout the state through job-driven vocational counseling concentrated on potential opportunities for individuals in high-growth sectors. Among other items, Commerce has provided DRS with assistance on utilization of regional sector-based data to target employers for participation in the project. The core partners are also working with the DOL technical assistance consultants on a complementary effort to align business services. This project will provide the State of Illinois with an environmental scan of current business engagement and service delivery across identified workforce system partners. The product will include a “map” of current efforts to support the first step of alignment - understanding gaps, overlaps and opportunities for integration. This product will also include best practices in aligned business engagement and service delivery based on information available through Workforce3One and the contractor’s experience working in other states and regions.

WORKFORCE EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN (WESP)

The ICCB worked in concert with Commerce in the development of a statewide Workforce Strategic Education Plan (WESP). Eleven regional forums were held in the 10 economic development regions in the spring of 2015. Initial employment and education data was used to identify the trends as well as the supply/demand opportunities in each region of the state (www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan). The ICCB will continue the development of the WESP in the spring of 2016. The information gathered through these education planning meetings was used to inform WIOA state and regional planning efforts that began in the fall of 2015.

INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING (IET)

The ICCB Adult Education program has developed an IET initiative to provide the opportunity for adult education students to earn industry recognized credentials, college certificates and college credit while studying to obtain the high school equivalency certificate or learn the English language. Through the IET program in Illinois, Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS), many students will be connected to Title I to ensure they have the services necessary to gain access to resources for training and employment opportunities upon completion.

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE (DEI)

DRS has worked effectively with Commerce around its DEI projects throughout the state. In one instance, DRS provided cooperative funding to support individuals with disabilities seeking to establish their own businesses. In another, DRS provided funding to community providers as part of an overall package including DEI funds. DRS and Commerce have a strong level of communication around the needs of the individuals being served and the goals of the projects. Career Workshops & Rapid Response Employment Security staff in partnership with core partners hold joint workshops on a regular basis regarding various topics (i.e., resume writing, employer panels, and re-employment) as a way to educate the public on employment, as well as services provided by each
core and required partner. Additionally, Commerce and Employment Security Unemployment Insurance collaborate to hold rapid response workshops for dislocated workers. Economic Information and Analysis Employment Security provides statewide and sub-state occupational employment projections, so Commerce and LWIAs, along with other core partners, can determine in-demand occupations and community colleges can plan education and training curricula. The Interagency Work Group has established an interagency data team to develop comprehensive data reports that will be used in the state and regional plans. The data team will continue to work with the regional planning teams to provide additional data as needed. For the regions to be able to access labor market information that is specifically tied to the WIOA regional plans, the team will work on developing a vehicle to access this specific information on whichever platform is utilized for the state. Currently, Employment Security provides labor market information on the Employment Security website in a variety of formats including the Illinois Virtual Labor Market Information System (VLMI) that is supported by the DOL Workforce Information Grant and that is a required deliverable for all states.

INTERAGENCY AGREEMENTS

The Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) will continue to pursue development and expansion of agreements that further service integration and promote employment of people with disabilities. This includes agreements relating to services to students and youth with disabilities and transition services generally. In an effort to provide a voice for each core and required partner, facilitate relationships between the two, and for improving alignment for WIOA implementation, an initial step was for each state agency executive to appoint a top program administrator to serve on the Interagency Work Group to address the policy, technical and programmatic details associated with integration and alignment of workforce programs under WIOA. Attachment I (www.illinoisworknet.com/wiostateplan) provides a list of the Interagency Work Group members and their respective State Agency.

INTERAGENCY WORK GROUP

This group of top program administrators began meeting in May 2015 and had met eight times as a full group by December 2015 and many more times as working subgroups. This group will continue to meet regularly throughout WIOA implementation. All meetings are supported by highly structured agendas designed to bring about clarity at the state-level regarding integration and alignment under WIOA. The major accomplishments of this group include:

- Participating in a coordinated process for review of the WIOA Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, a key purpose of which was to identify issues, requirements and opportunities of common interest and concern;
- Reaching an agreement on the specific career services and workforce programs and activities each required partner will make available at One-Stop Comprehensive Centers throughout Illinois, and this includes the full configuration of workforce service delivery through Comprehensive One-Stop Centers in Illinois ();
- Working collaboratively to coordinate the different methods that will be used to deliver these services, including delivery through technology that meets the “direct linkage” requirements of WIOA;
- Providing state-level input regarding policies guiding the local implementation of governance provisions such as the initial designation of “Local Workforce Innovation Areas” (https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20L%20-%20Local%20Workforce%20Area%20Designation.pdf);
• Jointly developing a strategy for defining the number and location of Comprehensive One-Stop Centers in Illinois; concurring on a general framework for cost sharing under WIOA, including a framework for sharing one-stop center infrastructure costs;
• Establishing a working subgroup of the four core program partners to develop and implement work plans for the Unified State Plan and Performance Accountability requirements, the two areas in which core program partners have unique obligations and implementation challenges. These subgroups continue to meet to work through operational details in these and other areas;
• Establishing an interagency task force to focus on operational details and mechanics associated with local and state infrastructure cost funding mechanisms under WIOA;
• Identifying initial elements to be included in the Governor’s Guidelines (https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/Attachment%20J%20-%20Governors%20Guidelines.pdf) providing direction and support regarding negotiations of program partners at the state and local levels. This process has included vetting these elements multiple times to obtain the perspectives of all key stakeholders;
• Developing suggested content for the required guidelines from the Governor and reviewing draft and final versions of these guidelines, including obtaining and incorporating suggested content from local program partners and stakeholders before final guidelines were issued by the Governor; and
• Providing input to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) regarding the criteria and process to be used for certification of Comprehensive One-Stop Centers.

REGIONAL MEETINGS

Illinois hosted a series of regional planning kick-off meetings in December 2015. These meetings included partner program staff from each economic development region to learn about each other’s programs, review regional demographic and program data and learn to use a data-driven planning approach. Using a format developed by the state, they also began to work on a planning framework specific to their region. Approximately 500 individuals attended these events and had the opportunity to ask questions and determine how their programs could contribute to the overall success of the region.

WIOA WEDNESDAY WEBINARS

Interactive webinars are held weekly to provide a platform for interagency partners to discuss integral WIOA implementation topics. The widely attended webinars provide a forum for questions and increase awareness of the required partner programs, activities and resources.

ILLINOIS WORKS TOGETHER UPDATES

To facilitate common and ongoing communications, the Interagency Work Group initiated a joint monthly newsletter entitled “Illinois Works Together” to provide a source of common information about WIOA implementation progress for all local program partners and stakeholders. This newsletter will continue as long as needed. Additionally, the ICCB collaborated with the partners to release a newsletter to highlight WIOA activities providing a better understanding of partner agencies requirements to the adult education and career and technical education community. Challenges Core Partners Face in Pursuing Additional Alignment

The following summarizes challenges for the workforce system in Illinois as identified by core partners.
Employers have difficulty finding skilled workers with essential workplace skills and technical skills.

The quality of local career services varies.

The level of regional and local cross-program collaboration varies.

The willingness to pursue innovation at regional and local levels varies.

The level and quality of regional and local public-private sector partnerships varies.

The level and quality of employer engagement varies, but the areas with weak engagement outnumber those with well-connected employers.

The level and quality of co-located, in-person services has coverage gaps in the Comprehensive One-Stop Center.

There is an emphasis on a one-size-fits-all approach, with little effort to leverage job seekers’ existing knowledge and skills to accelerate training.

The service delivery model in Illinois is characterized by a silo approach.

WIOA implementation has brought to the surface several challenges, including a lack of awareness among partners regarding other programs and requirements, as well as supportive services. Although major strides have been made since the implementation of the Interagency Work Group, the need for new and stronger relationships was identified.

Core partners in Illinois realize that there are significant data system limitations. The main barrier to joint case management is the inability to share data through a streamlined process due to the lack of common participant identification method. Federal laws governing some programs limit data sharing, and the information collected is not aligned across core partners due to statutory regulations (e.g., Adult Education does not require a Social Security Number to receive services). Currently, core partners collect their data using their respective state agency systems. There is currently no ability to track participants across programs and no mechanism to identify when a participant has exited from all applicable WIOA core programs. To begin to overcome these challenges, Illinois is exploring a “Common Framework Approach” and is seeking additional federal guidance from DOL and the U.S. Department of Education. In the meantime, core program partners are collaboratively developing a working definition of “exit” to ensure continuity across programs. A common identifier or “common participant ID” across the core programs is also under consideration.

Other challenges include core program statutory requirements serving as roadblocks to alignment. For example, DRS intake by other entities is prohibited because only DRS staff are permitted or allowed to handle “non-delegable functions” by statute. This is also an issue with the administration of the training component of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act as it specifically relates to the state merit staff administrative requirement.

While core partners recognize measurable skills gains as critical to the effectiveness of state and local workforce innovation systems, the definition and parameters of measurable skills gains are lacking, as are the standards for assessment tools, methods and measures for employer satisfaction.

Illinois is also challenged by geographical and local boundaries alignment. Some boundaries do not perfectly align with LWIA boundaries. For example, under Adult Education, “Area Planning Councils districts” do not align with LWIAs, but they are aligned with Community College Districts.

Finally, the state is also interested in examining best practices to support the planning and coordination of workforce, education and economic development services in interstate regions.
Despite these challenges, Illinois is positioned to address these challenges through the Interagency Work Group that is creatively and collaboratively working to find solutions and to create new opportunities.

Opportunities for Future Alignment between Core Partners

Desired systemic improvements of various levels of specificity, most of which involve some level of service integration, were identified by the core partners. One of the first items of interest is to integrate service delivery, especially at the front end of the process. As part of this plan, the goal of service integration is to ensure that every individual seeking help has the opportunity to take advantage of the full range of services for which they are eligible regardless of which partner program sees them first. The initial step toward this goal is ensuring informed, effective program liaisons are the first point of contact at a one-stop center. These liaisons will be cross-trained to be knowledgeable about all programs available at the one-stop center and will be responsible for guiding walk-in customers to the appropriate program staff.

State agency partners also have the opportunity to improve the coordination and delivery of career services and case management services through state and regional initiatives to promote leading business practices. They also will promote the ongoing professional development of front-line staff providing client services through case management academies and national professional development and credentialing programs.

Core and required partners in Illinois are working towards the development of a common intake system. The first step is the development of a “smart referrals” system. A portal will need to be developed for auto-referrals. The group hopes to learn from an existing “Career Connect System” between DRS and the Chicago-Cook Workforce Partnership. Adult Education and DRS see a great need to connect adults with learning disabilities to vocational rehabilitation services. DRS involvement through community colleges has traditionally been through the disability services offices; however, this is mostly focused on students pursuing degrees. One idea is to reach out to this existing connection to see if there are other applicable types of trainings using the resources at the community college. Disability offices tend to work with people coming from high school and self-identifying as having a disability, whereas adults might develop a condition later in life or have an undiagnosed disability that meets DRS eligibility requirements.

Overall, this system will improve coordinated client tracking, giving partners the ability to view when a client “exits” a program or completes training. For example, it is important for Employment Security to see confirmation when a customer is “job ready” because then it may assist the customer in finding employment through the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program staff. This brings the customer back full circle and carries out the mission of WIOA.

Other efforts and opportunities for data integration also include applying a GIS mapping analysis to illustrate the location of training providers, employers and workers or job seekers throughout Illinois. This will help show the distance between training providers and employers, the lack of access to training providers in some areas and sources of employees for employers. Eventually, the mapping could be used across required programs to map the distance customers must travel to access services throughout local workforce delivery systems.

In the past, there was a high-level of variability in terms of core partner participation in workforce board activities, as well as in communication around service issues. Core partners are making a coordinated effort to ensure their staff participates with local workforce boards. For example, DRS
moved to strengthen involvement in all LWIAs so that individuals with disabilities can benefit from the workforce system regardless of where they live.

Core and required partners in Illinois recognize that the key to successful alignment is constant, clear communication. Significant effort will be required to establish and maintain effective channels of communication. However, the return on investment is potentially enormous when compared to the improved efficiency and effectiveness of our programs and outcomes for our customers.

C. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

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

ILLINOIS WORKFORCE SYSTEM

Governor Rauner’s administration is focused on delivering value for taxpayers, creating a pro-jobs economic climate, ensuring world-class schools and educational options for every Illinoisan and bringing greater accountability to state government. This section of the plan includes a summary of the workforce system and the capacity of state agencies and boards that are responsible for the administration of the workforce and education programs. Additional operational detail is provided in Chapter 8 of the full version of the Unified State Plan.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AND PLANNING

The Governor’s Office and the IWIB provide the major mechanisms for promoting joint planning and coordination around the vision, principles, goals and strategies outlined in Illinois’ Unified State Plan (provided in Chapter 4 of the full version of the Unified State Plan). Deputy Governor Trey Childress, Secretary of Education Beth Purvis and other cabinet members have been directly engaged in developing the vision and principles outlined in the Unified State Plan. The Governor’s Policy Advisor for Economic Development, Sean McCarthy, has a direct line of authority over Commerce and Employment Security and will work to ensure that the implementation of the strategies and activities outlined in this Unified State Plan align with the Governor’s workforce education and economic development policies and vision.

WIOA STATE INTERAGENCY WORK GROUP

The state established an Interagency Work Group to identify and address the state-level issues associated with the implementation of WIOA. The intended outcomes are state-level policies that provide consistent direction to regional and local-level partners as they establish effective One-Stop Delivery Systems. In concert with these discussions, regional and local-level partners are examining issues that will influence the full implementation of WIOA and are making recommendations to the Interagency Work Group for consideration. Through the Interagency Work Group, the core partners are establishing a new mechanism to address operational and policy issues under WIOA implementation and those that are raised by local Comprehensive One-Stop Center partners.

STATE AND REGIONAL PLANNING PROCESS

In August of 2015, Governor Rauner asked the National Governors Association to facilitate a “Policy Academy” among his key staff, business leaders, state administrators, agency directors and local
partners to develop the vision and guiding principles for WIOA state and regional planning. The Education, Workforce and Economic Development Leadership Team (Leadership Team) (see Attachment F) (http://www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan) emerged from the Policy Academy that includes high level state policymakers with the authority to make commitments on behalf of their respective agencies and other key public and private stakeholders whose involvement is critical to the development of the Unified State Plan. The Leadership Team is responsible for establishing the vision and principles and directing the implementation of strategies outlined in Chapter 4 of the full version of the Unified State Plan. The Leadership Team has also worked with the Interagency Work Group to oversee and direct the development of the regional planning process in Illinois. The planning process is underway in each of Illinois' economic development regions including the review of data, establishment of goals, development of strategies and the integration of services.

STATE AGENCY CAPACITY

The following is a list of the state agencies and boards that are responsible for the administration of the workforce, education and economic development programs outlined in WIOA.

- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
  - Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs
  - Employment and Training under the Community Services Block Grant Program (authorized under Department of Housing and Urban Development)
  - Trade Act Programs
  - Regional Economic Development
- Illinois Community College Board
  - Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
  - Career and Technical Education Programs at the postsecondary level authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006
- Illinois Department of Employment Security
  - Wagner-Peyser Employment Services including Labor Market Information
  - Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Monitor Advocate System
  - Veterans’ Employment and Training Services
  - Unemployment Insurance Services
  - Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Illinois Department of Human Services
  - Rehabilitation Services for Individuals with Disabilities
  - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Illinois Department on Aging
  - Senior Community Service Employment Program
- Illinois Department of Corrections
  - Section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Commerce is the state agency that leads economic development efforts for Illinois and is responsible for the WIOA Title IB activities. Key program activities include distributing WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth formula funds, Trade Act funds and National Emergency Grants to 22 Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs), monitoring the local areas’ use of WIOA funds, and providing technical assistance to local areas. Commerce is responsible for the administration of the required and allowed Governor’s Statewide Workforce Activities as outlined in WIOA. Commerce issues formal guidance to the local areas through policy letters and notices designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. Commerce also provides staff support to the IWIB and its committees and ad hoc task
forces. As part of the Bureau of Community Development, Commerce also oversees the employment and training programs under the Community Services Block Grant Program.

ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD

The ICCB has the responsibility of overseeing Title II activities under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. Services provided include, but are not limited to, assessment, basic skills instruction, English language acquisition instruction, high school equivalency instruction, career awareness, workforce preparation, online instruction, bridge programs as well as accelerated education and training programs. Currently, there are 86 providers of adult education and family literacy in Illinois that consist of community colleges, community based organizations, regional offices of education and other approved providers. The mission and vision of adult education is to provide every individual in Illinois access to adult education and literacy services. In Illinois, more than 1.7 million adults have less than 12 grades of formal education, approximately 2.6 million Illinois residents speak a language other than English in their home, and more than 552,000 immigrants reside in Illinois. ICCB seeks to prepare adult learners to compete for jobs of the present and the future. To accomplish this it is necessary to build a system that is education, training and workforce focused.

Illinois has seen continued growth and demand for postsecondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) in both higher completion rates and increased program offerings. Last year roughly two-thirds (66.9%) of all Illinois community college graduates earned a CTE degree or certificate and 615 new CTE programs were approved to meet workforce demands. In Illinois, federal Perkins Title I funds are divided 60/40 between the secondary and post-secondary career and technical education systems where administration is shared between the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and ICCB. The 57 Education for Employment (EFE) regions receive funds from ISBE to support secondary CTE programs, and the 39 community college districts receive funds from ICCB to support post-secondary CTE programs.

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) is the most important piece of legislation affecting career and technical education (CTE) in Illinois. Perkins IV focuses state and local efforts on continuously improving programs to facilitate the academic achievement of CTE students by: strengthening the connections between secondary and post-secondary education; restructuring the way stakeholders, high schools, community colleges, universities, business and parents work together; and increasing state and local accountability standards. The intent of Illinois post-secondary CTE is to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in the global economy. Career and technical education equips students with the foundational knowledge to explore a cluster of occupations and careers. As a student evolves through their educational experience, their focus is narrowed to a particular program. This process allows students to transition seamlessly while providing them with hands-on exploration, rigorous academics and the support necessary to succeed.

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT

Security Employment Security is responsible for administering Title III activities for employment services under the Wagner-Peyser Act. The intent of Wagner-Peyser services is to sustain economic growth by meeting the needs of job seekers, increase awareness of resource providers and expand employment opportunities. Services offered include assessments for job placement, job search assistance and online job application processing. Employment Security is responsible for increasing community awareness about the services provided via job fairs, community collaborations, onsite recruitments, resource linkage and presentations.
Additionally, Employment Security is responsible for labor market and career information in Illinois through cooperative agreements with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to provide statewide and sub-state employment, unemployment, occupation, wage information and statewide and sub-state industry and occupational employment projections. These data products serve as the cornerstone for the Career Information System, a web-based tool for students and job seekers to identify Illinois' in-demand jobs and make informed choices about future career pathways.

I LLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Vocational Rehabilitation administers Title IV activities and is the state’s lead agency serving individuals with disabilities. Vocational Rehabilitation works in partnership with individuals with disabilities and their families to assist them in making informed choices to achieve full community participation through employment, education and independent living opportunities. The primary focus of Vocational Rehabilitation is to assist individuals with significant disabilities in obtaining and retaining competitive integrated employment. Vocational Rehabilitation services are designed to prepare an individual for employment through an individualized planning process.

The Illinois Department of Human Services’ Division of Family & Community Services is also the state administrator of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. DHS operates Family Community Resource Centers statewide serving TANF customers, linking them to time-limited cash assistance for basic needs, transitional services to help families become independent and screening for issues related to substance abuse, mental health and domestic violence, as well as referrals to address those issues. Employment and Training activities under TANF include assisting qualified individuals in applying for cash assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and medical assistance; evaluating and assessing eligibility for work and training programs; and evaluating eligibility for supportive services, such as transportation and child care. Each TANF and SNAP customer who is engaged in workforce development services receives such services according to a responsibility and services plan.

The Department of Human Services’ Division of Family & Community Services will have a strong presence in Comprehensive One-Stop Centers and is committed to increasing workforce engagement with collaborative partnerships to achieve employment opportunities for all adults served by DHS. Casework staff will develop a services plan for TANF and SNAP recipients connecting them to career pathways opportunities offered in each Comprehensive One-Stop Center. Casework staff will connect customers in need of barrier reductions services at the Comprehensive One-Stop Centers and connect them to services offered by DHS such as mental health, substance abuse and child care. Supportive services will be provided to participants as per policy guidelines.

I LLINOIS DEPARTMENT ON AGING

The mission of the Illinois Department on Aging (Aging) is to serve and advocate for older Illinoisans and their caregivers by administering quality and culturally appropriate programs that promote partnerships and encourage independence, dignity and quality of life. In accordance with the federal Older American’s Act regulations, Aging has divided Illinois into 13 Planning and Service Areas (PSAs). The 13 PSAs in Illinois are each managed and served by an Area Agency on Aging. Aging works in partnership with these agencies: 12 not-for-profit corporations and one unit of local government, the City of Chicago. Area Agencies on Aging (Area Agencies) have the primary task of planning and coordinating services and programs for older people in their respective areas. The Area Agencies receive funding from Aging based on a formula which takes into consideration the
number of older citizens and minorities in that area, as well as the number living in poverty, in rural areas and alone. Like Aging, Area Agencies are not, as a rule, direct service providers. Area Agencies contract with local agencies which provide services to the older citizens who live in the same community.

The role of Aging under WIOA is to ensure the needs of older workers and job seekers are considered so that these individuals remain employed for as long as they wish. Age is often a barrier to finding employment, and Aging’s resources can be leveraged to help older citizens find and retain employment. As a partner program, Aging has the role of administering the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) under Title V of the Older Americans Act. The SCSEP program provides on-the-job training and resources/referrals for all individuals 55+ years of age that will ultimately lead to unsubsidized employment.

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

The mission of the Illinois Department of Corrections (Corrections) is to serve justice in Illinois and increase public safety by promoting positive change in offender behavior, operating successful reentry programs and reducing victimization. Corrections administers the Second Chance Act Program, which allows governments and communities to coordinate reentry efforts, enhance existing housing and support services, engage in evidence-based practices and create innovative strategies that will serve the growing needs of this population, ultimately increasing public safety and reducing recidivism.

NATIONALLY DIRECTED/LOCALLY ADMINISTERED PROGRAMS

There are a number of nationally directed workforce programs that are administered in some of the regions and LWIA in Illinois. These programs, where present, will be included in the regional and local workforce plans.

NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM

The National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) provides employment and training services that are targeted to migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs). The program partners with community organizations and state agencies to counter the chronic unemployment and underemployment experienced by farmworkers who depend primarily on jobs in agricultural labor performed across the country. NFJP partners with the state monitor advocate to provide outreach services to farmworkers and their families. NFJP provides career services and training to eligible farmworkers, and coordinates with the One-Stop Delivery System. The National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grant awards are determined by a formula that estimates, by state, the relative demand for NFJP services.

YOUTHBUILD

The US Department of Labor grants funds directly to the local YouthBuild program through an annual competitive process. YouthBuild is a community-based alternative education program that provides job training and educational opportunities for at-risk youth ages 16-24. Youth learn construction skills while constructing or rehabilitating affordable housing for low-income or homeless families in their own neighborhoods. Youth split their time between the construction site and the classroom, where they earn their GED or high school diploma, learn to be community leaders, and prepare for college and other post-secondary training opportunities. YouthBuild includes significant
support systems, such as mentoring, follow-up education, employment and personal counseling services; and participation in community service and civic engagement.

JOB CORPS

Job Corps is an education and vocational training program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that helps young people ages 16 through 24 improve the quality of their lives through vocational and academic training. Job Corps’ mission is to attract eligible young people, teach them the skills they need to become employable and independent and place them in meaningful jobs or further education. Job Corps centers are operated for the U.S. Department of Labor by private companies through competitive contracting processes, and by other federal agencies through interagency agreements. For more information regarding the Job Corps Program in Illinois please visit: http://www.jobcorps.gov/centers/il.aspx
B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

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

**STATE VISION**

Illinois is planning now for what the state will come to be during the 21st century. These are exciting times, marked by dramatic change, challenges and opportunities. Illinois is emboldened by a strong sense of mission and is encouraged by WIOA, which codifies into law many of the strategies that the state has worked on for years. Vision Statement Promote employer-driven talent solutions that integrate education, workforce and economic development resources across systems to provide businesses, individuals and communities with the opportunity to prosper and contribute to growing the state’s economy.

Principles

- **Demand Driven Orientation** - Through a sector strategy framework, the state should support the systemic assessment of business needs for talent across local, regional and state levels and ensure that strong partnerships with business drive decision-making across the talent pipeline.
- **Strong Partnerships with Business at All Levels** - Strong partnerships with business should focus on equipping employers with the support and tools they need to define in-demand skills and articulate those needs to education and training providers. Strong partnerships at the regional and local level should be recognized and inform the development of high-quality partnerships across the state.
- **Career Pathways to Jobs of Today and Tomorrow** - Partnerships with business should drive the development of career pathways that meet employers’ skills needs today, while offering individuals clear opportunities to build and upgrade their skills and advance their career over time. Those pathways should be integrated within the P-20 system, including adult education, to help students and young adults identify career pathway options and offer flexibility to build upon their skills to meet the evolving needs of the global economy.
- **Cross-agency Collaboration and Alignment** - Developing career pathways and stackable credentials will demand collaboration and alignment across agencies that contribute to Illinois’ overall talent pipeline. There should be a focus on improving the strategic connections across all components and levels of the education and workforce systems to ensure no “dead ends” exist.
- **Integrated Service Delivery** - Enhanced collaboration and alignment across state agencies at a strategic level should lead to better service delivery integration. Multiple state agencies and partners are positioned to support the success of individuals and businesses. Technology and integrated data systems can help illustrate those interrelationships and position the system to collaborate across agencies to deliver the right services at the right time.
- **Access and Opportunity For All Populations** - Coordinated and comprehensive services can help targeted populations (see Chapter 2 of the full version of the Unified State Plan) prepare for and advance along a career pathway. Connecting individuals with relevant supports, such as transportation, child care and transition services enables the systems to be responsive to the needs of individuals’ workforce readiness.
- **Clear Metrics for Progress and Success** - The Unified State Plan should include metrics for assessing progress and success. As the talent pipeline serves two customers - businesses and individuals - those metrics should reflect the strategic priorities of the state that relate to building a globally competitive workforce. Illinois will develop metrics or examine existing
framework metrics that define successful career pathway programs (i.e., Alliance for Quality Career Pathways (AQCP))

- **Focus on Continuous Improvement and Innovation** - The system should establish mechanisms for continual assessment of system performance and opportunities for improvement, as well as for encouraging innovation and disseminating best practices. This includes the continued enhancement of non-traditional methods for delivering education and training. Additionally, the growing role of entrepreneurship and its contributions to employment and economic growth will be an outcome of continuous improvement and innovation.
2. GOALS

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

- Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers of employment* and other populations.**
- Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

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

** Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

State of Illinois Goals

Goals for Preparing an Educated and Skilled Workforce

1. Expand career pathway opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings. Key elements and metrics include:
   - Increase the number of businesses that work with the state, regional and local workforce partners to communicate specific occupational competencies.
   - Increase the number of businesses that work with the state, regional and local partners to identify industry credentials and their related competencies.
   - Increase the number of workforce professional that promote work-based learning and earning of industry credentials as part of their programs of study.
   - Increase the number of businesses the offer work-based learning opportunities.

2. Expand career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services and expansion of bridge programs. Key elements and metrics include:
   - Provide more youth and individuals with barriers to employment with coordinated wrap-around services such as: mentoring, remedial math and reading, contextualized bridge programs, GED testing, disability accommodations, acquiring workplace skills and other training tailored to address barriers to employment for special populations prior to or along with technical skill training.
   - Promote a lifelong learning approach that leverages the accelerated time to earnings and full productivity model and follows up with additional skill training to allow workers to advance up the career pathway.
Promote the ten success elements for workforce pilot programs serving “opportunity youth” (i.e., young people who are not in school and not working) that were identified by the IWIB Youth Task Force. These elements utilize the principles and strategies of the WIOA Unified State Plan, and include:

- Partnerships with education, employers, and workforce boards to plan and leverage resources.
- Business engagement in the development and management of career pathway programs.
- Credentials, certifications, and/or postsecondary access that result from career pathway programs.
- Targeting of high demand industries and higher skill occupations that meet youth earnings and career goals.
- Development of work-based learning opportunities to experience the workplace first-hand.
- Individual career/employment plans for each youth participant.
- Availability of individual supports in order to meet the unique needs of each youth program participant.
- Contextualized learning and work-based skills that prepare youth for employment.
- Measuring results within the context of a continuous improvement methodology that will maintain and enhance program quality.
- Sustainability plans that connect the program to broader long-term talent strategies.

Goals for Meeting the Skilled Workforce Needs of Employers

1. Foster improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors that are the engine of economic growth for the state and its regions. Key elements and metrics include:
   - Create an environment favorable to the formation of employer-led sector partnerships to improve communications between business, economic development, workforce development and education.
   - Improve the number of meaningful, public-private relationships.
   - Improve the quality of the existing public-private partnerships.
   - Promote data and demand driven workforce and education initiatives.

2. Expand information for employers and job seekers to access services by improving the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development and education initiatives for supporting sector partnerships and career pathways. Key elements and metrics include:
   - Develop and promote data analytics to discover which services provide a better return on investment for various industries, populations and locales.
   - Help businesses, jobseekers and students make better-informed decisions by understanding the options available and the implications of each.
   - Invest in Geographic Information Systems to provide improved spatial analysis to identify patterns in demand service deserts and economic hot spots.
3. PERFORMANCE GOALS

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

Performance Goals for Illinois

Illinois submitted proposed performance targets along with supporting documentation (including source references) associated with the PY 2016-2017 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) proposed performance targets. This has been prepared in response to the instructions contained in the United States Department of Labor (DOL) Employment Training Administration’s (ETA) Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 26-15 dated June 29, 2016, and in accordance with the Unified State Plan.

In preparation for the submittal of performance goals, the Interagency Work Group established a performance accountability subgroup consisting of representatives from the core partners. The subgroup identified the extent to which each core partner either now captures the data elements required or has access to the data required from other sources. The subgroup then identified gaps between the data required to support performance accountability and the data each core partner now collects, stores and reports. Based on an analysis of historical and current participant outcomes, each core partner will negotiate WIOA performance measures for each indicator, as applicable. The six primary indicators of performance under WIOA for each core partner (note that primary indicator four and five do not apply to Wagner-Peyser Employment Services) are:

- Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after exit - The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program (for Title I Youth, the indicator is participants in education, or training activities or employment in the 2nd quarter after exit);
- Employment Rate 4th Quarter after exit - The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program (for Title I Youth, the indicator is participants in education, or training activities or employment in the 4th quarter after exit);
- Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after exit - The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the 2nd quarter after exit from the program;
- Credential Attainment Rate - The percentage of program participants who attain a recognized post-secondary credential or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program;
- Measurable Skills Gains - The percentage of participants who during a program year are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational or other forms of progress towards such a credential or employment;
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers (not yet defined by DOL or the United States Department of Education (ED)) - This will be based on indicators developed as required by Section 116(b)(2)(A)(iv) of WIOA.

The core partners of the Interagency Work Group will present performance data to the IWIB quarterly, to meet the requirement in WIOA that the board assess overall effectiveness of the workforce system.
Baseline indicators are indicators for which states will NOT propose an expected level of performance in the Unified State Plan submission and will not need to come to agreement with the Departments negotiated levels of performance. Indicators negotiated for PY 2016-PY 2017 are:

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

Note: Vocational Rehabilitation will not be negotiating levels of performance for PY 2016 and PY 2017. All indicators are deemed baseline.

The context in which Illinois developed its proposed levels of performance for Adult, Dislocated Workers, Youth and Wagner-Peyser measures encompasses past performance outcomes. Averages for prior program year outcomes were computed (using the five prior program years), as well as a Target Outcome and Predicted Outcome that was produced by DOL. Target values were established using all of the above as well as the ninety percent threshold applied to the DOL Target Outcome. Taking all data element outcomes into account, along with the environmental factors in Illinois, each target was set as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: PY 2016 and PY 2017 Proposed Levels for WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth and Wagner-Peyser Performance Targets for Illinois Proposed Levels of Performance for Illinois
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Measure</th>
<th>PY 2016 Goals</th>
<th>PY 2017 Goals</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ADULTS</strong></td>
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<td>Employment Rate 2nd Quarter</td>
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<td>Employment Rate 4th Quarter</td>
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<td><strong>YOUTH</strong></td>
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<td><strong>WAGNER-PEYSER</strong></td>
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</table>
August 12, 2016

Mr. Julio Rodriguez, Deputy Director  
Office of Employment & Training  
IL Dept. of Commerce & Economic Opportunity  
100 W. Randolph Street  
Chicago, IL 60601

Mr. Jeff Mays, Director  
IL Department of Employment Security  
33 S. State Street – 9th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60603

Dear Mr. Rodriguez and Mr. Mays:

Thank you for the submittal of the Program Years (PY) 2016 and 2017 expected levels of performance for the Workforce Development Activities under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner Peyser Act, as amended under Title III of WIOA, and for the State’s participation in the formal performance negotiations which took place on July 29, 2016.

This letter serves as official notification advising Illinois of the agreed-upon PY 2016 and 2017 negotiated levels of performance. A copy of the negotiated performance levels is enclosed with this letter.

This official notice also constitutes a modification to the Unified State Plan. The State must ensure that the PY 2016 and 2017 negotiated levels of performance are included in the State’s official copy of its Unified Plan. Any published copy of the Unified Plan on the State’s Website must also include these negotiated levels of performance. ETA will incorporate these negotiated performance levels into the Regional and National Office copies of the Unified State Plan. Lastly, the State must enter these negotiated levels of performance into the State Plan Portal.

We look forward to working with you and your staff as Illinois continues to implement its Unified Plan. If you have any questions, please contact me or Marium Baker, the Illinois Federal Project Officer, at 312-596-5526 or baker.marium@dol.gov.

Sincerely,

Christine Quinn  
Regional Administrator

Enclosure – PY 2016 and 2017 Negotiated Levels of Performance

cc: Patricia Schnoor, Technology and Performance Manager  
    Neely Schlosser, Performance Manager  
    Sergio Estrada, Federal Performance Reporting Manager
# Workforce Development Activities (Title I of WIOA)

**Wagner Peyser Act (as amended by Title III of WIOA)**

*Negotiated Levels of Performance for PY 2016 and 2017*

## Illinois

**Workforce Development Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>PY 2016</th>
<th>PY 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Rate 2(^{nd}) Quarter after Exit</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Rate 4(^{th}) Quarter after Exit</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median Earnings 2(^{nd}) Quarter after Exit</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dislocated Worker</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment Rate 2(^{nd}) Quarter after Exit</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment Rate 4(^{th}) Quarter after Exit</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
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<td>Median Earnings 2(^{nd}) Quarter after Exit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Youth</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment or Placement Rate 2(^{nd}) Quarter after Exit</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
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<td>Employment or Placement Rate 4(^{th}) Quarter after Exit</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
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## Wagner Peyser Act

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>PY 2016</th>
<th>PY 2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wagner Peyser</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment Rate 2(^{nd}) Quarter after Exit</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment Rate 4(^{th}) Quarter after Exit</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median Earnings 2(^{nd}) Quarter after Exit</td>
<td>$4,911</td>
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4. ASSESSMENT

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

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) has identified benchmarking as a leading strategy to assess and evaluate results. The annual benchmarking report (https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/DownloadPrint/2015%20Benchmark%20Report.pdf) is submitted to the IWIB, Governor and General Assembly as a method for measuring progress of the state’s workforce development system. The ten established benchmarks are designed to provide a comprehensive and balanced picture of the status and progress of workforce development services in Illinois. They are divided into three general categories:

Workforce Quality Benchmarks

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

- Educational level of working-age adults
- Percentage of the adult workforce in education or workforce training
- Adult literacy
- Percentage of high school graduates transitioning to education or workforce training
- High school dropout rate
- The number of youth transitioning from 8th grade to 9th grade

Earnings Benchmarks

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

- Percentage of individuals and families at economic self-sufficiency
- Average growth in pay

Competitive Business Advantage Benchmarks

The final two benchmarks are key indicators of Illinois’ competitive business advantage.

- Net job growth
- Productivity per employee

Illinois will consider refining the State Benchmark Report and identify additional metrics (such as the Alliance for Quality Career Pathway(AQCP) that will assess both our progress towards meeting WIOA goals and the effectiveness of the strategies to move towards those goals. The expanded benchmark report will clearly link overall organizational principles to program goals, strategies and outcomes. This provides the framework for an ongoing feedback mechanism, through which program goals and strategies can be consistently evaluated with regard to their contributions towards program outcomes and may be adjusted if those outcomes indicate a need.
By maintaining this “clear line of sight” between goals, strategies and outcomes, the assessment process becomes much more comprehensible and transparent for all of the WIOA partners, as well as for the IWIB in its oversight role.

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

The Interagency Work Group will work with partners to integrate evaluation and research projects that impact the workforce system in Illinois. The state will also consider the information developed by the interagency data team and other program-specific evaluations, research reports and pilot programs such as the Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing Program, Workforce Data Quality Initiative and Disability Employment Initiative in the development of an integrated evaluation and research approach.
The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).
State Strategies: Industry and Sector Partnerships, Career Pathways

Below are the state’s six strategies to achieve our vision and goals. They consist of six major strategies, and each directly underpins Illinois’ commitment to engage and support all parts of our workforce, education and economic development systems as we move to a transparent and seamless system. The system contains bedrock principles of holistic career pathway management for secondary as well as postsecondary students and workers and demand-responsive solutions for employers. These strategies are at the foundation of addressing the needs of individuals that have barriers to employment. The activities associated with implementing this strategy will be fully described in the operational planning section.
Strategy 1: Coordinate Demand-Driven Strategic Planning at the State and Regional Levels

The state is coordinating a demand-driven strategic planning process across education (secondary and postsecondary), workforce and economic development at the state, regional and local levels. This team has built on and integrated current state and regional planning initiatives and resources of the core state agency partners and other non-core partners, including the economic development arm of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce).

Strategy 2: Support Employer-Driven Regional Sector Initiatives

Illinois has been actively engaged in sectoral work and sector strategies for over a decade. In 2006, Illinois was one of six states invited to participate in the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices Sector Strategies Learning Academy funded by the Mott, Ford and Joyce Foundations. The initial policy recommendations resulting from this effort remain valid today: a) Promote regionalism; b) Increase funding opportunities; c) Use data to drive decisions; d) Align resources and strategies; e) Present opportunities for unified messages; and f) Build legislative support. State and regional strategic planning activities will align all levels of education, workforce and economic development and lay the foundation for employer-driven regional sector initiatives.

Strategy 3: Provide Career Pathways for Economic Advancement

The state and regional sector initiatives will provide the foundation for sector-based career pathway initiatives that expand career and educational opportunities for students and workers, including those facing multiple barriers to employment to achieve economic advancement.

Strategy 4: Coordinate and Enhance Career Services and Case Management

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) has approved a collaborative policy development process to ensure a broad range of stakeholder engagement that yields cost-effective and efficient guidance to the field. The Interagency Work Group will use this forum to develop and implement policies for integrated and enhanced career services and case management. In addition, these policies will help inform the curriculum developed in the Workforce Academy mentioned in Activity 4.3 under III.a.2.A.

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

The Interagency Data Team will design, develop and use the statewide public-private data infrastructure (Strategy 6) to provide both employers and job seekers with tools to promote and access job openings, review changing labor market trends and opportunities, identify funding opportunities and fund education, training and support services. This will require partners to ensure that privacy and security issues are addressed.

Strategy 6: Improve Public-Private Data Infrastructure

The Interagency Data Team, in cooperation with the Interagency Work Group, will expand and improve the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the five strategies described above. This requires the integration of labor market information with state education and workforce longitudinal data systems, as well as program and case management systems. The infrastructure to support and integrate labor market information with workforce partners and education partners was
bolstered by the award of a Workforce Data Quality Initiative Grant in 2012. Labor market information from Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) was already matched with workforce program information from Commerce and also with education information from the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). In addition to bringing other partners into this data infrastructure, the team will also coordinate with the data analysis related projects recommended through other related projects, such as the Higher Education’s Commission on the Future of the Workforce, ICCB Strategic Plan, and Community College Presidents’ Council. This will also be an opportunity for the team to include the data experts at the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) as ISBE moves toward implementing policy recommendation that infuse demand driven career pathway approaches into secondary curriculum.

Strategies to address the needs of Targeted Populations

As stated in section II.c.2, the following strategies address the needs of targeted populations including but not limited to the long-term unemployed, individuals with disabilities, out-of-school youth, veterans, English language learners, low literacy adults and low-skilled adults.

PROVIDE CAREER PATHWAYS FOR ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT

The state and regional sector initiatives will provide the foundation for sector-based career pathway initiatives that expand career and educational opportunities for students and workers, including those facing multiple barriers to employment to achieve economic advancement. This will include an emphasis on lifelong learning and allowing each participant to reach his or her full potential. The strategy is to help participants enter or re-enter the workforce by striking an individualized balance between finding a self-sustaining job as quickly as possible and a career pathway that may require additional education and training along with work experience to continue progressing up their career ladder. More simply put, the emphasis will shift from finding a job to finding a career.

COORDINATE AND ENHANCE CAREER SERVICES AND CASE MANAGEMENT

As stated in Section III.b.2, the IWIB has implemented a collaborative policy development process that the Interagency Work Group will use in developing policies for integrated and enhanced career services and case management, like those mentioned above, and include provisions to remove barriers that hinder providing services to special populations. For example, the Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP) is a program in which eligible veterans receive employment service workshops while incarcerated in designated Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) facilities. Employment Security coordinates with IDOC to provide employment workshops for inmates that are within 18 months of their maximum release date and are eligible veterans. The IVTP workshops are facilitated by nine Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and place emphasis on job search techniques and resources to help these veterans address the unique employment barriers and other obstacles they will face when attempting to reenter the job market after their release.

Additionally, the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) serves people with disabilities who typically have additional barriers to employment beyond the presence of a disability. DRS case management system includes the Survey of Individual Needs, which addresses a variety of support needs that frequently present barriers to employment. Many people with disabilities have low incomes, and about one-third of DRS participants receive Social Security disability benefits. Long-term unemployment is a frequent condition for many people with disabilities, as is a poor work history and a lack of basic skills, along with limited English proficiency.
The DRS program seeks to mitigate these barriers through supportive services alongside provision of vocational services. Through participation in local workforce boards DRS expects to expand its awareness of supportive services available throughout the community and make these available to people with disabilities as needed.

EXPAND EMPLOYER AND JOB SEEKER ACCESS TO LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

The Interagency Data Team will design, develop and use the statewide public-private data infrastructure (Strategy 6) to provide both employers and job seekers with tools to promote and access job openings, review changing labor market trends and opportunities, identify funding opportunities and fund education, training and support services. This will require partners to ensure that privacy and security issues are addressed. The intent is to create ways, such as dashboards, to transform the overwhelming amount of data into information that is both usable and actionable by program staff, job seekers, educators, students and parents. A current example of this strategy that can be emulated is the United States Department of Education (ED) College Scorecard (www.collegescorecard.ed.gov). This application makes it easier for students and parents to compare and evaluate colleges. We envision a similar approach to providing labor market information.

IMPROVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE DATA INFRASTRUCTURE

The Interagency Data Team, in cooperation with the Interagency Work Group, will expand and improve the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the five strategies described above. This requires the integration of labor market information (LMI) with state education and workforce longitudinal data systems, as well as program and case management systems. Just as with LMI dashboards, there is great potential to improve the ability of job seekers and students to assess and evaluate education and training programs, know which programs are more likely to lead to career pathways employment and in the end, help assess the potential return on investment for their available options.
2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE STATE TO ACHIEVE FULLY INTEGRATED CUSTOMER SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH THE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS DESCRIBED ABOVE. ALSO DESCRIBE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN REGARD TO WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(2).

Alignment of Core, Required and Optional Partner Programs

In August of 2015, Governor Rauner asked the National Governors Association to facilitate a “Policy Academy” among his key staff, business leaders, state administrators, agency directors and local partners to develop the vision and guiding principles for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) state and regional planning. The Education, Workforce and Economic Development Leadership Team (Leadership Team) emerged from the Policy Academy that includes high-level state policymakers with the authority to make commitments on behalf of their respective agencies, key members of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) and other key public and private stakeholders whose involvement is critical to the development of the Unified State Plan.

The policy academy is an example of Illinois’ efforts to align the core program, required programs and other key education, workforce and economic development resources in the State of Illinois.

Table 10: Illinois Education, Workforce and Economic Leadership Team

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

The Leadership Team and the IWIB established the vision and principles that have provided guidance to the Interagency Work Group, a working group of state-level WIOA program partners designated with the lead responsibility to coordinate implementation of WIOA in Illinois, on the implementation activities outlined in this plan. Illinois has taken a proactive approach in developing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Duren</td>
<td>Executive Vice President of Administrative Services</td>
<td>CompTIA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gretchen Koch</td>
<td>Executive Director of Workforce Development Strategies</td>
<td>MAN-TRA-CON Corporation, LWIA 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Lively</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
<td>High School District 214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laz Lopez</td>
<td>Association Superintendent for Teaching and Learning</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia Martin</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Illinois Chapter, Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandy Martin</td>
<td>Corporate Human Resources Manager</td>
<td>North American Lighting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Massie</td>
<td>IWIB Member Attorney at Law</td>
<td>Massie and Rennick, LLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Mays</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Department of Employment Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim McDonough</td>
<td>Chief of Staff</td>
<td>Department of Employment Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolores Simon</td>
<td>Executive Deputy Director of Business Services</td>
<td>Department of Employment Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry Scrogum</td>
<td>Senior Policy Advisor</td>
<td>Department of Employment Security</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marlon McClinton</td>
<td>President and CEO</td>
<td>Utilivate Technologies, LLC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vic Narusis</td>
<td>Deputy Director Office of Business Development</td>
<td>Department of Commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jim Nelson</td>
<td>Vice President of External Affairs</td>
<td>Illinois Manufacturers' Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karin Nordin Reaves</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
<td>Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (LWIA 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terri Payne</td>
<td>Assistant to the Secretary Treasurer</td>
<td>AFL-CIO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Petrilli</td>
<td>State Director, Illinois SBDC Network</td>
<td>Department of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Beth Purvis</td>
<td>Secretary of Education</td>
<td>Office of the Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Rico</td>
<td>IWIB President, President and CEO</td>
<td>Rico Enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julio Rodriguez</td>
<td>Deputy Director, Office of Employment and Training</td>
<td>Department of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manny Rodriguez</td>
<td>Senior Director</td>
<td>Jane Addams Resource Corp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan Salgado</td>
<td>President and CEO</td>
<td>Instituto Del Progreso Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margie Schiemann</td>
<td>IWIB Member Director of Infrastructure Programs and Support</td>
<td>Nicor Gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kris Smith</td>
<td>Director, Division of Rehabilitation Services</td>
<td>Department of Human Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doug Morton</td>
<td>Manager, Division of Rehabilitation Services</td>
<td>Department of Human Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Tony Smith</td>
<td>State Superintendent of Education</td>
<td>Illinois State Board of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dora Welker</td>
<td>Division Administrator</td>
<td>College and Career Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wegi Stewart</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>The Community Foundation of Macon County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trina Taylor</td>
<td>Deputy Director of Service Delivery</td>
<td>Department of Employment Security</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrie Thomas</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Chicago Jobs Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Uremovich</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Manhattan Mechanical Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terri Winfree</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Prairie State College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andria Winters</td>
<td>Assistant Director</td>
<td>Department of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Wu</td>
<td>Director of Government Transformation</td>
<td>Office of the Governor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Leadership Team and the IWIB established the vision and principles that have provided guidance to the Interagency Work Group, a working group of state-level WIOA program partners designated with the lead responsibility to coordinate implementation of WIOA in Illinois, on the implementation activities outlined in this plan. Illinois has taken a proactive approach in developing
guidelines and templates to document how the core programs, required programs and other resources to achieve the goal of fully integrating customer services.

The IWIB was consulted regarding the work of the Interagency Work Group on the “Governor’s Guidelines to State and Local Program Partners for Negotiating Costs and Services” to fulfill the WIOA requirement that the Governor issue guidance to state and local partners for negotiating cost sharing, service access, service delivery and other matters essential to the establishment of effective local workforce development services under WIOA (§678.705). The Governor’s Guidelines address: negotiation of local memoranda of understandings (MOU), negotiation of infrastructure costs, negotiation of local one-stop delivery system costs, timelines for negotiation of MOUs and infrastructure costs, and reporting of interim and final negotiation outcomes and appeals process.

The core, required and optional partner program administrators in each local workforce area are included in the State of Illinois MOU template, service matrix and budget worksheet.

The local partners, Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIB) and Chief Elected Officials (CEO) are expected to act in accordance with these guidelines and to otherwise comply with them. The scope of the Governor’s Guidelines include:

- Establish general guidance, direction and requirements for negotiating (MOU) that are required in each Local Workforce Innovation Area (LWIA) to support the operation of the local one-stop delivery system.
- Provide guidance related to Comprehensive One-Stop Center infrastructure costs, including guidance for budgeting, allocation and negotiation of these costs using the two funding methods WIOA prescribes.
- Provide guidance for identifying and negotiating local one-stop delivery system costs that will be shared among required partners.
- Prescribe timelines for local negotiation of MOUs and for reporting of the outcomes of these negotiations.
- Outline requirements for the process through which required partners can appeal decisions made in the application of these guidelines if the state infrastructure cost funding mechanism is used.

Additionally, the Governor’s Guidelines include service matrices for career services and other programs and activities, demonstrating how career services and other programs are available through the local Comprehensive One-Stop Centers by required partner. To provide uniformity across the local areas, an MOU template is included in the Governor’s Guidelines. This template provides the structure and elements of the MOU, providing placeholders for each local area to add their respective content.

**Regional and Local Planning and MOU Review**

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

- The State-level review will be organized “vertically” by region with regional plan components being reviewed first, local plan components for all LWIAs within a region being reviewed second and MOUs for all LWIAs within a region third.
- The review of regional and local plans and MOUs will assess:
• Completeness of submission according to published guidance (i.e., Planning Guide and Governor’s Guidelines, Revision 1);
• Whether the content in each area is adequate (i.e., thorough, complete, specific, relevant and consistent with regional and local plans and the Unified State Plan);
• Commitment to integration;
• Potential issues of compliance with federal requirements described in the final rule;
• Program-specific issues that may need to be addressed by an individual partner or by the Interagency Work Group;
• Best or noteworthy practices; and
• Suggestions from reviewers for improvement.

The results of the State review will be formally provided to regions and local areas immediately after the late September Interagency Work Group meeting and prior to October 1st. The goal of this process is to document the “as is” state of program coordination at the regional and local levels.

Strategies to Strengthen Workforce Development Activities in Regard to Weaknesses

The comprehensive review of the regional and local plans and the MOUs will provide a baseline for continuous improvement and the implementation of the State’s WIOA strategies at the regional and local levels. The state recognizes this process is a first step in addressing the challenges of aligning the core, required and optional partners and other available resources. The regional review process will allow the state to make incremental progress in addressing challenges (weaknesses) of the workforce system in Illinois including:

1. The quality of local career services.
2. The level of regional and local cross-program collaboration.
3. The willingness to pursue innovation at regional and local levels.
4. The level and quality of regional and local public-private sector partnerships.
5. The level and quality of employer engagement.
6. The level and quality of co-located, in-person services in Comprehensive One-Stop Centers.
7. Breaking through a service delivery model that is characterized by a silo approach.

Quality of Career Services

The quality of career services may be the most vital program element that determines the eventual success of our participants and businesses. Understanding this reality has prompted the core partners to agree that service standards must be established, training must be provided. As part of the coordinated career services approach, the core partners intend to establish policy that each of their local program staff will ensure every participant has an individual assessment of their current essential workplace skills, identify any areas for improvement and ensure the participant becomes proficient in these skills while enrolled in one or more of the WIOA programs. Likewise, each participant will be evaluated to determine their technical skill proficiency to identify occupational skill gaps relevant to occupations in-demand in their region and the programs will coordinate services to ensure the skill gaps are addressed while the individual is enrolled. Finally, each career services manager’s client outcomes will be tracked for the purposes of identifying best practices that can be replicated across regions and programs.

Program staff must also better understand how to obtain and use the most current labor market information to assist participants in making informed career and training decisions. For example, when career services staff understand the actual occupational skills supply and demand in their
region, they will be able to recommend training and education options more likely to lead to training-related employment.

Regional & Local Cross-Program Collaboration / Quality of Co-Located One-Stop Services / Dismantling the Service Delivery Silos

Coordination of career services will require program staff to be better aware of the spectrum of services in all the programs. The core partners are discussing the development of systemic, cross-program procedures to ensure each participant receives every service for which they are eligible that is relevant to their securing employment.

Illinois will address the challenges of a geographically and economically diverse state where the coordination of career services and programs varies widely. The core partners concur on the need to establish rigorous service standards and provide adequate training to career services staff in all WIOA programs. This is especially important for services provided at a Comprehensive One-Stop Center. Policy will place an emphasis on individualized services, where the programs coordinate services designed to meet the individual where they are at on their career pathway and moving away from a one-size-fits all approach.

Policy and procedures are under development to formally break down the silo approach by requiring cross-program integration of individualized assessment and services.

Fostering the Development & Acceptance of Innovation

During the recent regional innovation initiatives and planning efforts it became apparent that the willingness to embrace new and improved strategies varied across the ten Economic Development Regions and also across partners. No one region was found to have equal commitment to change from all its partners; while no one partner was found to have equal commitment to change from offices across all the regions.

The core partners will take steps to improve innovation by emphasizing a more inclusive approach that fosters more grass roots innovation rather than the traditional top down strategy. State set aside funds can be made available to promote regional innovation. Where innovation initiatives involve national competitive grants, efforts will be made to jointly develop applications with regions committed to the project. The overarching goal is to allow every organization involved to feel a sense of ownership in the process of innovation.

Coordinated Business Services

The ICCB Workforce and Education Strategic Planning Process and the WIOA Regional Planning Process confirmed that businesses demand coordinated services from the workforce, education and economic development system. Leveraging United States Department of Labor (DOL) technical assistance support, Illinois engaged the firm of Maher & Maher to assess current business services practices in the core programs and also develop a framework to identify common goals and specific activities for each partner to undertake that will strengthen our ability to provide coordinated business services.

Experience has shown the areas of the state where local staff has established coordinated communication and services to businesses are more likely to have better outcomes for their participants and their employers. Public-private partnerships that are business-led are much more
likely to be active and engaged and challenge the state and local education and workforce systems to keep up with their needs. Commerce, Employment Security and ICCB have partnered on several efforts designed to bring the interests of employers to the forefront. Regional strategic planning for ICCB and the community colleges, followed by sector strategies training and then by WIOA regional planning have all emphasized the importance of business engagement. Perhaps more importantly, these efforts highlighted the need for public sector follow through. Businesses disengage as soon as they perceive no return on their investment for participating in publicly funded initiatives. Going forward, DVR will also be participating in these efforts.

**Strategies to address the needs of Targeted Populations**

Illinois outlined the six interrelated strategies associated with the implementation of WIOA in Section II.c.1 of this plan. The specific strategies that address the needs of the populations targeted in Section II.a. (including but not limited to the long-term unemployed, individuals with disabilities, out-of-school youth, veterans, English language learners, low literacy adults and low-skilled adults) are summarized below.
Provide Career Pathways for Economic Advancement

The state and regional sector initiatives will provide the foundation for sector-based career pathway initiatives that expand career and educational opportunities for students and workers, including those facing multiple barriers to employment to achieve economic advancement. This will include an emphasis on lifelong learning and allowing each participant to reach his or her full potential. The strategy is to help each participant to make an informed decision as to how best to enter or re-enter the workforce based on his or her personal circumstances. By striking an individualized balance between finding a self-sustaining job as quickly as possible versus pursuing a career pathway that may require additional education and training to continue progressing up their career ladder. The emphasis will shift from finding a job to finding a career regardless of the entry point on the pathway.

Coordinate and Enhance Career Services and Case Management

As stated in Section III.b.2, the IWIB has implemented a collaborative policy development process that the Interagency Work Group will use in developing policies for integrated and enhanced career services and case management, like those mentioned above, and include provisions to remove barriers that hinder providing services to special populations. For example, the Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP) is a program in which eligible veterans receive employment service workshops while incarcerated in designated Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) facilities. Employment Security coordinates with IDOC to provide employment workshops for inmates that are within 18 months of their maximum release date and are eligible veterans. The IVTP workshops are facilitated by nine Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and place emphasis on job search techniques and resources to help these veterans address the unique employment barriers and other obstacles they will face when attempting to reenter the job market after their release.

Additionally, the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services serves people with disabilities who typically have additional barriers to employment beyond the presence of a disability. DRS case management system includes the Survey of Individual Needs, which addresses a variety of support needs that frequently present barriers to employment. Many people with disabilities have low incomes, and about one-third of DRS participants receive Social Security disability benefits. Long-term unemployment is a frequent condition for many people with disabilities, as is a poor work history and a lack of basic skills, along with limited English proficiency. The DRS program seeks to mitigate these barriers through supportive services alongside provision of vocational services. Through participation in local workforce boards DRS expects to expand its awareness of supportive services available throughout the community and make these available to people with disabilities as needed.

EXPAND EMPLOYER AND JOB SEEKER ACCESS TO LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

The Interagency Data Team will design, develop and use the statewide public-private data infrastructure (Strategy 6) to provide both employers and job seekers with tools to promote and access job openings, review changing labor market trends and opportunities, identify funding opportunities and fund education, training and support services. This will require partners to ensure that privacy and security issues are addressed. The intent is to create ways, such as dashboards, to transform the overwhelming amount of data into information that is both usable and actionable by program staff, job seekers, educators, students and parents. A current example of this strategy that can be emulated is the United States Department of Education (ED) College Scorecard (www.collegescorecard.ed.gov).
This application makes it easier for students and parents to compare and evaluate colleges. We envision a similar approach to providing labor market information.

IMPROVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE DATA INFRASTRUCTURE

The Interagency Data Team, in cooperation with the Interagency Work Group, will expand and improve the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the five strategies described above. This requires the integration of labor market information (LMI) with state education and workforce longitudinal data systems, as well as program and case management systems. Just as with LMI dashboards, there is great potential to improve the ability of job seekers and students to assess and evaluate education and training programs, know which programs are more likely to lead to career pathways employment and in the end, help assess the potential return on investment for their available options.
The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that support the State’s strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II.(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—
A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—
1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

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

State Board Functions

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Illinois State Statute require that the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board accomplish the required functions by providing strategic leadership and oversight which will further the state’s goals to meet the workforce needs of businesses and workers. Bylaws are in place to further guide the IWIB’s work and decision making process.

The IWIB initiated a strategic planning process that guides the vision for the state’s workforce system and provides a roadmap for board members to put into place a sound operational structure to ensure the expanded functions under WIOA are carried out. This planning process moves the board from a tactical, operational approach to one where the members will think strategically and serve as system leaders. The Unified State Plan for Illinois is the first tangible product resulting from the IWIB strategic planning process.

Alongside the strategic planning process the IWIB has chosen to prioritize its work through standing committees and a task force structure to ensure business and stakeholder engagement in the operation of the state workforce system that meets the required WIOA board functions. This structure was established to ensure board members remain engaged in furthering the identification and understanding of root causes in workforce and economic development challenges.

Committees are generally longstanding groups that conduct regularly occurring business on behalf of the IWIB and are designed to focus on long-term issues and strategies. Task forces, however, are short-term and goal-oriented bodies that are appointed to achieve articulated outcomes by a specified date and have highly engaged membership and staff support to accomplish those outcomes. Both committees and task forces are approved by the IWIB through action items that detail the objectives and timeframes (if appropriate) of the group. They both comprise members of the IWIB in addition to identified stakeholders throughout the state. Staff from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) provides support to these bodies.

Upon approval of the full IWIB, the co-chairs are responsible for establishing the committees or task forces and designating the members of these working bodies. While the IWIB encourages wide participation from stakeholders on the standing committees and task forces, the chair must be an IWIB member. The committee chairs shall convene meetings as needed, but in the case of a standing committee it shall be convened no less than four times per year in advance of IWIB meetings. State representatives are responsible for the staff support of these groups.

The agenda at regular meetings of the IWIB will include a time for formal reports to allow for the presentation of committee and task force recommendations and approval as necessary. Additionally, the IWIB members have increased their role in aligning with education groups within the state to build strong linkages that will expand work-based learning opportunities and open up career pathways for all learners. Building these strong linkages is part of moving the board toward becoming system leaders and supports further alignment of the education, workforce and economic development vision. The IWIB actively participates in the Illinois P-20 Council, the Illinois Pathways
Advisory Council and the Higher Education Commission on the Future of the Workforce, as well as the technical assistance work group on New Skills for Youth and the 21st Century Workforce Advisory Fund Board.
2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State’s Strategies identified in Section II(c). above. This must include a description of—

A. CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE’S STRATEGY

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

Core Program Activities to Implement the State’s Strategy

Six policy strategies were developed to reach the goals of the Unified State Plan. Each strategy has specific implementation activities that leverage the collective experience of the core and required partners and builds on experience gained through public and private sector innovation initiatives. The core partner programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) are fully committed to achieving improved service delivery through program alignment. Under the direction of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) and the Interagency Work Group, each program is taking steps to assess how services overlap and identify opportunities for investment of resources toward service alignment in support of the state strategies. For example, over the last 18 months, the core partners contributed funding and in-kind resources of staff and facilities to develop state and regional labor market information, establish strategic planning frameworks for the community colleges and subsequently for WIOA programs and businesses. This work started with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) collaborating with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce), employers and other partners to create a Workforce Education Strategic Plan for community colleges, adult education, career and technical education, business and industry, and corporate training. This strategy is in alignment with the Unified Plan’s strategic priorities. Woven throughout these strategies will be a continued assessment of how funds from each program can be used to leverage other funding, especially private-sector support, toward program alignment and implementing the following strategies.

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

The state is coordinating a demand-driven strategic planning process across education, workforce and economic development at the state, regional and local levels. This team has built on and integrated current state and regional planning initiatives and resources of the core state agency partners and other non-core partners, including the economic development arm of Commerce. This team will carry out the following activities to provide the support for regional planning, which provides the basis for implementing the remaining strategies, especially regional sector partnerships.

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

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) has established an Evaluation and Accountability Committee that will recommend tools, measures, and to (a) determine whether the Illinois WIOA Unified State Plan and other WIOA requirements are being carried out effectively, and (b) identify continuous improvement opportunities in the effectiveness and efficiency of Illinois’ workforce
development system. This committee will also serve as a resource to other IWIB committees in establishing standards and metrics to assess and continuously improve system and program performance.

During the first year the committee will create a framework by which to work. For the accountability component, the committee will map the components of the Unified State Plan to the work being carried out by all of the IWIB committees. Early work on evaluation will address questions of service delivery and potential approaches to answering those questions. Two early concrete results will be a revised Benchmark Report that has been produced annually that includes education, workforce and economic development indicators and benchmarks including an economic self-sufficiency benchmark for each region and exploring effectiveness measures for individual projects. Revising the Benchmark Report will include bringing together major stakeholders as well as state agency partners to develop strategic indicators and benchmarks for state and regional economic development. These include indicators and benchmarks for economic, job, income growth and distribution. Additionally, indicators and benchmarks for key economic development strategies, including workforce development, can be compared with other states and regions. In addition, the IWIB Evaluation and Accountability Committee will work with the Illinois Education and Self Sufficiency Council to review and finalize metrics defining economic self-sufficiency to inform the work of The Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth.

In subsequent years, the committee will begin looking at larger questions related to evaluation and performance. The committee will review the research agendas of various components of the system and identify opportunities to strengthen alignment and prioritization of research questions. The availability of the Illinois Longitudinal Data System and the Comprehensive Demographic Dataset will open new evaluation and research opportunities that could lead to improvements in the system.

Through the work of this IWIB Evaluation and Accountability Committee, the Interagency Work Group will build on the findings to: (1) develop a state and regional cross-agency benchmark report for stakeholders and the general public, and (2) provide regional planning data and tools to support regional planning to align education, workforce and economic development. Furthermore, the Interagency Work Group will build on existing agency initiatives to develop and use strategic indicators and benchmarks as part of comprehensive data resources for state and regional planning.

Foundational work for these efforts is in place from the updated state, regional and Local Workforce Innovation Area (LWIA) industry and occupational projections by the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) and the work by the ICCB that estimates the percent of the state’s population with post-secondary degrees in cooperation with the Illinois P-20 Council and its 60 by 25 goal for the state. Additionally, Employment Security provides key indicators of business growth and location, labor force participation and unemployment rates that will be used to support regional planning. Employment Security, through its partnership with Workforce Data Quality Initiative agencies, has developed a data infrastructure to produce workforce outcomes for education and training graduates. Work has already begun on mapping labor entrants and worker flows across jobs and over time.

All four core partners use these projections to identify in-demand industries and occupations and they have worked together using the national career cluster framework to integrate sector and career cluster initiatives throughout the state. All four core agencies have utilized U.S. Census data to estimate the size and characteristics of the population and labor force, including targeted populations facing multiple barriers to employment.
Activity 1.2: Establish Regional Planning Areas

The Interagency Work Group will use these planning resources to support regional planning within ten regions that have been defined by the Governor and supported by the IWIB as Illinois implements the integration of education, workforce and economic planning. These ten regions address the WIOA Section 106 requirement that the Governor identify and organize local workforce boards and core program partners into regional planning areas to engage in joint planning, integrate service delivery, share administrative costs and enter into regional coordination efforts with economic development agencies operating in the same region. The ten regions were established by the Governor based on the analysis of statewide commuting patterns surrounding major and minor metropolitan centers. As shown below and in Attachment S (www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan), these ten regions involve the following LWIAs and counties.
It is important to note that Illinois currently has 22 Local Workforce Innovation Areas. The state continues to recommend that Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) and Local Workforce Innovation Boards review the patterns in WIOA funding, participant service levels, and administrative costs and consider how these will impact service delivery and the ability to meet administrative requirements. The state has acknowledged the many efforts already undertaken to streamline operations and provide more efficient service delivery. The state continues to encourage CEO’s to consider a voluntary consolidation of LWIAs as an option to provide as much funding as possible for direct client services.

Activity 1.3: Conduct Integrated Regional Planning

The state Leadership Team and IWIB have developed and supported an integrated regional planning process in each of the ten regions that is coordinated with local area planning. As required by WIOA, this planning process will include how Local Workforce Innovation Boards will engage in the joint development and implementation of regional sector initiatives. ICCB, Commerce and other state agency partners established the foundations for regional planning with community colleges throughout Illinois through an ICCB strategic planning process in the spring of 2015. The process addressed workforce and education needs across the state to improve the changing economic and student needs within the ten planning regions and community college districts.

The state has worked with the Leadership Team, IWIB and local partners to develop regional planning workshops and a statewide summit to support the regional planning process. The graphic to the right illustrates Illinois’ regional planning framework that is customized for each regional team and its particular goals. Regional planning will address how to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development resources to identify opportunities for sector initiatives and partnerships that will promote business and expand career opportunities for more people in the region. The regional plans will also identify opportunities for the coordination and delivery of services.
Illinois Regional Planning Process Framework

1. Define Regions / Gather Data
2. Form State Leadership and Regional Planning Teams
6. Implement, Assess, Adjust, and Sustain
5. Develop Strategies and Align Resources
4. Assess Talent Needs and SWOTs
3. Form State and Regional Visions
The Interagency Work Group has developed a coordinated plan and Memorandum of Understanding review process that will include a formal report and on-site technical assistance reviews for each of the ten Economic Development Regions. It is important to note that the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services and Illinois Community College Board are all actively engaged in this on-going process.

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

Illinois has been actively engaged in sectorial work and sector strategies for over a decade. In 2006, Illinois was one of six states invited to participate in the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices Sector Strategies Learning Academy funded by the Mott, Ford and Joyce Foundations. The initial policy recommendations resulting from this effort remain valid today: a) Promote regionalism; b) Increase funding opportunities; c) Use data to drive decisions; d) Align resources and strategies; e) Present opportunities for unified messages; and f) Build legislative support. State and regional strategic planning activities will align education, workforce and economic development and lay the foundation for employer-driven regional sector initiatives. The graphic *Illinois Sector Strategy Success Factors* outlines a set of critical success factors for Illinois’ sector strategy initiatives.

The Illinois Community College Board is continuing the implementation of the Workforce Education Strategic Plan by creating workgroups, such as one focused on “essential skills,” for employers and workers in Illinois that is being led by Adult Education. These workgroups are and will be made up of diverse partners to build out and work around the findings of the employers’ input.

**Activity 2.1: Promote Employer-Driven Regional Sector Partnerships**

The Interagency Work Group, with input and direction from the IWIB, will work to expand the statewide policy framework that defines the goals and guiding principles of employer-driven sector partnerships developed through the national Sector Strategies Technical Assistance initiative. The framework also describes how state and regional resources can be used to launch, expand and support employer-led partnerships (see Attachment G posted at www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan). The core partners will implement strategies based on the framework and other leading national and state employer-driven models such as those developed with the support of the NGA Sector Strategies Learning Academy, the Workforce Innovation Fund and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Talent Pipeline Initiative.

The Department of Commerce will continue to promote employer-led sector strategies via technical assistance on the Illinois Next Generation Sector Strategies Framework and sector partnerships related to Talent Pipeline Management. Commerce will also leverage the work of a $4 million Sector Partner National Emergency Grant (PY15 Funds) to continue to provide training and work-based learning to long-term unemployed in the healthcare, manufacturing and transportation, distribution & logistics industries.

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

As required by WIOA 101(d)(3)(iv), the IWIB will work together with the Interagency Work Group to better align and integrate business services among the core programs, along with state and regional economic development partners.
This will focus on providing integrated business services to employers in targeted industries and occupations that are identified as in-demand through the state and regional planning process. The Interagency Work Group will support these business service teams through guides and tools, as well as professional development and training. This integrated business services initiative will be complemented by related initiatives to jointly leverage funding, including an emphasis on private sector investment, to support employer-driven sector initiatives, including how to leverage rapid response and layoff aversion funds for business retention. Commerce will also coordinate workforce development activities with the Department’s Business Services team as it provides services to sectors regionally and across the State. Commerce will also promote and encourage private sector leadership for the development of public initiatives most responsive to employer needs.
Strategy 3: Provide Career Pathways for Economic Advancement

The IWIB is strengthening its alignment with education groups that will open up career pathways for all learners to prepare them for economic self-sufficiency. In Illinois, the Illinois P-20 Council (P represents preschool and 20 stands for grade 20, education after college), which has a business membership emphasis, has become the conduit for developing a framework to improve the alignment of the state’s education systems. The IWIB Business Co-Chair plays a major role in the council and as the chair of one of its committees -- School, College and Career Readiness. This uniquely positions the IWIB to facilitate connections between workforce, education and business and industry partners by creating a common set of expectations, assumptions and definitions that enable the alignment of programmatic funds and resource supports to develop career pathways that build a stronger talent pipeline across all populations. Additionally, the IWIB Business Co-Chair and one of the required state legislative members of the IWIB are actively engaged in the Higher Education Commission on the Future of the Workforce to ensure that practices and policy recommendations to increase post-secondary education attainment and address regional workforce needs are embedded into WIOA implementation strategies.

The Illinois Community College Board, through the Adult Education and Workforce Division are developing strategies to address individuals with multiple barriers to employment. ICCB has created and implemented Pre-bridge, Bridge, IET programs such as I-CAPS (Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System) and I-TAPS (Integrated Training and Academic Preparation System) models designed to improve access to training leading to demand driven occupations for those most-underserved populations.

Policies and practices recommended from these efforts will be operationalized through current and future state and regional sector initiatives, such as those mentioned below in Activity 3.1, to provide the foundation for sector-based career pathway initiatives that expand career and educational opportunities for students and workers, including those facing multiple barriers to employment to achieve economic advancement.

Activity 3.1: Promote Leading Career Pathway Models and Best Practices

Illinois’ current efforts for aligning education, workforce and economic development is also 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. Across the system, Illinois is engaged in piloting and/or creating solutions to inform these models and ultimately policy recommendations such as:

- The New Skills for Youth Initiative which will allow Illinois to create a plan for designing and implementing a rigorous, demand-driven education system that will increase the number of students who complete career pathways beginning in secondary school and culminating in valuable post-secondary credentials.
- Defining High Quality Credentials that will place equal importance on industry recognized credentials by creating a definition for high quality that is based on sector-demand and self-sustaining wage data.
- Determining the Criteria for Progressive Pathways to establish a threshold definition of a career pathway program that promotes a common understanding of quality pathways and systems, while aligning to existing definitions, plans and guidelines.
• Creating 60 by 25 Communities and P-20 Regional Networks which are community and regional collaborations seeking ways to increase college and career success for students through regional action toward meeting a state target of adults in Illinois with high quality degrees and credentials to sixty percent by 2025 (60 by 25).

• Sector-based Job Training and Economic Development/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) pilot project involving community-based organizations serving SNAP and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients as well as ICCB initiatives, including Integrated Education and Training programs (IET). The IET program provides low-skilled adults with an opportunity to gain basic skills or work towards a high school equivalency while concurrently enrolled in a Career Technical Education program. Individuals enrolled in an IET program will receive instruction that is contextualized to a specific sector, employability/workforce preparation skills and includes a technical training program (i.e., welding). Individuals completing the IET program may earn an industry recognized credential(s), a college certificate and college credit. The idea is that these individuals are concurrently enrolled and can earn credentials within a year to 18 months, depending on the program.

• Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) pilot projects and career pathway initiatives for individuals with disabilities will be supported by core and required partners.

• Commerce will support making local staff aware of best and promising practices and provide technical assistance to foster their integration into the regular WIOA local workflow.

These efforts as well as others will inform the state in expanding career pathway approaches that can be implemented through regional sector partnerships and other regional sector initiatives. Policy recommendations, professional development and technical assistance will be central in addressing how to incorporate these pathway approaches as part of improving career services and expanding access to accelerated and integrated work-based and classroom training, aligned and integrated programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials, as well as support services for targeted populations facing barriers to employment. Additionally, career pathway approaches will include strategies for fully mainstreaming targeted populations that provide access to self-sustaining wages and career advancement.

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

The state agency partners will focus on expanding access and success in sector-based bridge programs that provide opportunities for low-skilled and low-literate youth and adults. The state will support new initiatives that promote sector-based pre-bridge, bridge programs and integrated education and training models that expand access and success of low-skilled youth and adults in career pathways. These programs are designed to introduce individuals to career pathway programs of interest. A common definition of bridge programs has been developed to ensure all core and required partners have a basic understanding of the provisions of services under these programs. The partners will revisit this definition and other policies to ensure that it aligns with current employer and workforce readiness needs, and include a definition of career pathways with common measures described in the Alliance for Quality Career Pathways. The state recognizes the use of bridge programs as a foundation for career pathway systems and also as a foundation for employment opportunities and other training. ICCB will work closely with core and required partners under WIOA to re-examine the use of bridge programs to those individuals who lack basic skills as a way of connecting with Title I and Title III for training opportunities and with Title IV to ensure those who are basic skill deficient and have learning differences have access tools needed to be successful.

Activity 3.3: Promote Innovation in Career Pathway Solutions
As stated under above in Activity 3.1, Illinois is laying a solid foundation for career pathway models for all populations. One such example in promoting innovation in career pathway solutions will include an increased emphasis on solutions for youth with barriers. Informed by the work of the IWIB Youth Standing Committee (previously the IWIB Disadvantaged Youth Task Force), state agency partners will use demonstrations and pilot projects that will guide policy recommendations and changes through activities such as:

- Exploring opportunities to expand career pathway for out-of-school youth through the blending of federal and state funding.
- Supporting education efforts to design and implement rigorous, demand-driven education systems that will increase career pathway curriculum in secondary settings.
- Developing joint projects between adult education programs, local workforce boards and others on project such as aligning WIOA Title I services with efforts that currently address justice-involved youth. Illinois is exploring a range of career pathway models seen nationally and statewide as best practices and examining ways to braid and blend funding for maximum impact. Where possible these models will be folded into existing juvenile justice efforts for seamless service alignment to add the expertise of WIOA service providers to strengthen employment and training models.
- Creating service alignment foster youth, including youth who are aging out of the foster care system. The Departments of Commerce and Child and Family Services are developing an initiative to expand career pathway services to older foster youth who are nearing age-out. Successful models for braiding and blending WIOA and Chafee Foster Care Funds are under consideration as a basis for Illinois’ effort.

Activity 3.4: Promote the Use of All Types of Apprenticeships

With increased attention on various forms of work-based learning, we expect apprenticeships to become more common as WIOA is implemented. The IWIB created an Apprenticeship Standing Committee to recommend a plan for establishing a comprehensive and integrated apprenticeship system in Illinois, oversee its implementation and performance and recommend improvements. Through its planning and implementation responsibilities, this committee will play a lead role in integrating Registered Apprenticeships throughout Illinois’ workforce development system. In addition, the ICCB through its Highway Construction Careers Training Program, prepares minority and low-income individuals to enter apprenticeship programs. Illinois will learn from the best practices and expand on programs like the Illinois Manufactures’ Association Education Foundation Advanced Apprenticeship Consortium project that will serve more than 7,000 collectively through apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship and career pathway programs in the State of Illinois. To leverage funding, apprenticeships will be embedded within Illinois Pathways, the state’s public-private career pathway system initiative. The use of apprenticeships will be encouraged through demonstration projects, policy guidance and technical assistance.

The IWIB is committed to using registered, non-registered and pre-apprenticeships as a major strategy for building the pipeline of skilled workers to help businesses throughout the state remain competitive. To this end, the IWIB created an Apprenticeship Committee in June 2016. This committee will now be the key resource for the IWIB to identify key policies, resources, opportunities and roadblocks as Illinois seeks to establish a comprehensive “scaffold” of pathways around and towards Registered Apprenticeships.
Strategy 4: Coordinate and Enhance Career Services and Case Management

As stated in Section III.b.2, the IWIB approved a collaborative policy development process to ensure a broad range of stakeholder engagement that yields cost-effective and efficient guidance to the field. The Interagency Work Group will use this process to develop policy recommendations to the IWIB for implementing integrated and enhanced career services and case management.

Activity 4.1: Provide Coordinated and Enhanced Career Services

The Interagency Work Group is working to support the delivery of enhanced career services to participants across partner programs. Employment Security is responsible for the Illinois Career Information System, a web-based tool that incorporates Illinois-specific actionable data on in-demand occupations and wages that allow students and job seekers to make informed decisions about their career pathways. These services will result in individualized plans addressing how to reach career goals based on career and skill assessments and identified barriers requiring support services. Agency partners also will include the assessment of digital literacy as a basic skill and provide services to participants in gaining these skills through career services and through additional services in career pathway bridge programs. Agency partners will also provide career services guides, tools and professional development to core program staff in providing these career services. This will be supported by the interagency labor market information team to provide improved access to career guidance information in in-demand industries and occupations and education, training and credentialing options for achieving career and education goals in participant plans (See Activity 5.2).

As a component of the Governor’s Guidelines, a service matrix was developed to display the career services available through each of the local Comprehensive One-Stop Centers from each of the required partners. Please note that these will be re-evaluated based upon final regulations.
| Outreach, Intake and Orientation                                                                 | • Community Service Block Grant |
|                                                                                               | • Illinois Department of Human Services Family Community Resource Centers |
|                                                                                               | • Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services |
|                                                                                               | • Illinois Community College Board Adult Education and Family Literacy |
|                                                                                               | • Illinois Community College Board -Post-Secondary Perkins |
|                                                                                               | • Illinois Department on Aging - Senior Community Service Employment Program |
|                                                                                               | • Title I-B |
|                                                                                               | • Illinois Department of Employment Security programs |
|                                                                                               | • Illinois Migrant Council - National Farmworker Jobs Program |
|                                                                                               | • Illinois Department of Corrections - Second Chance Program |

| Skills and Supportive Service Needs Assessment                                                | • Illinois Department of Human Services Family Community Resource Centers |
|                                                                                               | • Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services |
|                                                                                               | • Illinois Community College Board Adult Education and Family Literacy |
|                                                                                               | • Illinois Community College Board -Post-Secondary Perkins |
|                                                                                               | • Illinois Department on Aging - Senior Community Service Employment Program |
|                                                                                               | • Title I-B |
|                                                                                               | • Illinois Migrant Council - National Farmworker Jobs |
| Outreach, Intake and Orientation | · Community Service Block Grant  
|                               |   · Illinois Department of Human Services Family Community Resource Centers  
|                               |   · Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services  
|                               |   · Illinois Community College Board Adult Education and Family Literacy  
|                               |   · Illinois Community College Board -Post-Secondary Perkins  
|                               |   · Illinois Department on Aging - Senior Community Service Employment Program  
|                               |     · Title I-B  
|                               |   · Illinois Department of Employment Security programs  
|                               |   · Illinois Migrant Council - National Farmworker Jobs Program  
|                               |   · Illinois Department of Corrections - Second Chance Program  |
| Labor Exchange Services       | Illinois Department of Corrections - Second Chance Program  
|                               |   · Illinois Community College Board -Post-Secondary Perkins  
|                               |     · Title I-B  
|                               |   · Illinois Department of Employment Security programs  
|                               |   · Illinois Migrant Council - National Farmworker Jobs Program  |
| Program Coordination and Referral | Illinois Department of Corrections - Second Chance Program  
|                               |   · Community Service Block Grant  
|                               |   · Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services  
<p>|                               |   · Illinois Community College Board Adult Education and Family Literacy  |
| Outreach, Intake and Orientation                                                                 | • Community Service Block Grant |
|                                                                                              | • Illinois Department of Human Services Family Community Resource Centers |
|                                                                                              | • Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services |
|                                                                                              | • Illinois Community College Board Adult Education and Family Literacy |
|                                                                                              | • Illinois Community College Board -Post-Secondary Perkins |
|                                                                                              | • Illinois Department on Aging - Senior Community Service Employment Program |
|                                                                                              | • Title I-B |
|                                                                                              | • Illinois Department of Employment Security programs |
|                                                                                              | • Illinois Migrant Council - National Farmworker Jobs Program |
|                                                                                              | • Illinois Department of Corrections - Second Chance Program |
| Labor Market Information                                                                      | • Illinois Department on Aging - Senior Community Service Employment Program |
|                                                                                              | • Title I-B |
|                                                                                              | • Illinois Department of Employment Security programs |
|                                                                                              | • Illinois Migrant Council - National Farmworker Jobs Program |
|                                                                                              | Illinois Department of Corrections - Second Chance Program |
| Training Provider Performance and Cost Information                                            | • Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services |
|                                                                                              | • Illinois Department of Employment Security programs |
|                                                                                              | Illinois Migrant Council - National Farmworker Jobs Program |
|                                                                                              | Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services |
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Illinois Department of Corrections - Second Chance Program

Illinois Department of Employment Security programs
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| Information and Assistance with UI Claims                          | Illinois Department of Corrections - Second Chance Program |
|                                                                     | • Illinois Migrant Council - National Farmworker Jobs Program |
|                                                                     | • Illinois Department of Employment Security programs |

| Assistance Establishing Eligibility for Financial Aid               | Illinois Migrant Council - National Farmworker Jobs Program |
|                                                                     | • Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services |
|                                                                     | • Illinois Community College Board -Post-Secondary Perkins |
|                                                                     | • Title I-B |
|                                                                     | • Illinois Migrant Council - National Farmworker Jobs Program |
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<p>| Employment Retention Services                                      | • Illinois Department of Human Services Family Community Resource Centers |</p>
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Activity 4.2: Provide Coordinated and Enhanced Case Management Services

The Interagency Work Group will establish a case management team, as applicable, to coordinate and support the delivery of enhanced case management services to participants across the core programs and with other partners. This case management team will include LWIB, frontline and supervisory workforce personnel to create the Workforce Academy described below in Activity 4.3 to develop training in the use of case management data from aligned and integrated case management systems used by core programs and with other partners, including related human resources and supportive service programs (also see Activity 6.3). Illinois’ workforce and education partners are committed to this strategy as illustrated by the following initiatives.

- Commerce will collaborate with the IWIB and core partners to develop standards for integrated case management services and training for local staff to meet and exceed the established service standards. This will include improved and more widespread training on best practices and linking participant outcomes data to the staff assigned to each customer.
- The Illinois Community College Board will implement strategies for Local Title II providers to offer professional development on assessment for case managers. ICCB will also continue to work on alignment of the Adult Education Area Planning Councils with the LWIAs to foster better case management and customer services for individuals with multiple barriers to employment.
- Title II Adult Education will continue to strategize with core and required partners, specifically TANF and Title I, to maximize efforts to provide coordinated services to mutual clients such as those underserved populations.

Activity 4.3: Promote Continuous Improvement and Ongoing Professional Development

State agency partners will promote continuous improvement in career services and case management services through state and regional initiatives to promote leading business practices working with the IWIB as part of its expanded role (WIOA 101(d)(3)(vii). Specifically, the IWIB, and Interagency Work Group, will be leading an effort to create a Workforce Academy. LWIB and local input of front-line and supervisory workforce personnel will be critical in the development of the Academy. The Academy will build a common understanding of Illinois’ vision and support the move to an integrated delivery system building the capacity of staff through cross-training and other professional development opportunities. In addition, front-line staff will be afforded opportunities to participate in ongoing professional development through topic specific policy academies as well as national professional development and credentialing programs, such as the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP). Furthermore, the IWIB and Interagency Work Group will leverage the expertise of the ICCB Adult Education program to provide professional development to agency partners in the appropriate administration of educational assessment of basic skill deficiencies. As feasible, training will be delivered through technological solutions will be pursued to maximize access and cost-effectiveness.

Activity 4.4: Promote the Incorporation of Required Partner Services

The core partners will explore opportunities to incorporate the services of the Comprehensive One-Stop Center partners into case management and career services. Illinois has made progress through the Interagency Work Group to identify the business services, career services, training services and supportive services of the state’s workforce, education and economic development partners.
Through the implementation of best practices from programs such as DEI, the state will develop policies through the IWIB policy process to ensure that there is a customer-centered approach of coordinating services that consider the additional needs of the targeted populations as identified in this plan.

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

The Interagency Data Team will design, develop and use the statewide public-private data infrastructure (Strategy 6) to provide both employers and job seekers with tools to promote and access job openings; review changing labor market trends and opportunities; identify funding opportunities and fund education, training and support services. This will require partners to ensure that privacy and security issues are addressed.

**Activity 5.1: Improve Employer Tools for Communicating and Accessing Information**

The Interagency Data Team will develop new tools for employers to communicate their forecasted demand for workers and review and provide input into industry and occupational projections developed through Employment Security. This will include new tools for employers working together in leading regional partnerships to continuously communicate short-term forecasts of job openings and competency and credentialed requirements for these jobs. This will build on tools and best practices from employer-led national and state initiatives, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Talent Pipeline Management Initiative and the Vermilion Advantage pilot project. The team also will improve employer capacity to easily communicate career opportunities and current job openings to regional partnerships and their broader labor market in Illinois. This will be accomplished through employer tools that can be easily integrated with their current human resource information systems and their own websites that provide information on careers and job openings. Commerce and other regional and local partners will work with businesses to improve public/private communication of workforce needs, including demand competencies and the location, timing, quantity (what/where/when/how many) of specific demands and talent flow analysis.

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

The IWIB has increased their role in aligning with education. This includes significantly increased coordination between workforce and secondary and postsecondary education to promote career awareness, career exploration and planning as well as student exposure to in-demand careers. The Interagency Data Team, in cooperation with the Interagency Work Group, will utilize existing tools and develop new and improved tools and information to not only support the enhanced career services provided through the core programs and other partners, but also to the secondary and postsecondary education partners. The team will expand the Illinois Career Information System tools to avoid duplication and to provide the ability to use a flexible and robust system (Strategy 4). The team also will provide ongoing training and support to front-line career services and case management staff to improve access and use of these tools and resources as part of the Workforce Academy.

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

To improve the access and use of the WIOA eligible training provider lists (ETPL) by employers and job seekers, the labor market information team will make Illinois WorkNet even more user-friendly and work with other state agencies to share similar information.
This will be accomplished in collaboration with the policy process being put into place to ensure that systems are in line with and supporting the implementation of policy. Commerce will make ETPLs available on the Illinois WorkNet web portal, along with provider performance and return on investment information for students and jobseekers.

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

Labor market and career information is currently provided on the Employment Security website through a variety of web-based tools included in the Illinois Virtual Labor Market Information (VLMI) System supported by Geographic Solutions and the Illinois Career Information System, which incorporates Illinois-specific labor market information (LMI). Through the partnership with the core partners, additional enhancements will improve the current platform and changes will be made through any new technology platform utilized by the state. The Illinois Community College Board will work with Adult Education providers to utilize LMI in making decisions about integrated training and bridge programs.

Strategy 6: Improve Public-Private Data Infrastructure

The Interagency Data Team, in cooperation with the Interagency Work Group, will expand and improve the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the five strategies described above. This requires the integration of LMI with state education and workforce longitudinal data systems, as well as program and case management systems.

- The Illinois Community College Board will continue its efforts with other state level core and required partners, specifically Employment Security and Commerce, to develop a system that will align and integrate labor market information with state educational and workforce longitudinal data leading to better integrated customer services for both the job-seeker and the employer.

Activity 6.1: Enhance the State Labor Market Information System

The core partners, including the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security), will work to enhance the LMI system to support the six WIOA strategies listed in this chapter. Traditional LMI produced by Employment Security is readily available on the Employment Security website as well as through VLMI (a Geographic Solutions web tool) which houses the Workforce Information Database per the requirements of the Workforce Information Grant. Traditional LMI includes occupational wage information, current economic conditions by industry and geography as well as short term and long term Industry and Occupational Employment Projections by local area. Real time LMI includes information on The Conference Board’s Help Wanted Online Job Ads postings by Economic Development Region and can be customized upon request. Other real time LMI utilizes information from the state’s Unemployment Insurance and Employment Service programs.

Activity 6.2: Expand and Improve the State Longitudinal Data System

The Illinois data team will continue to expand and improve the state education and workforce longitudinal data system to support the six strategies. This will include initiatives to use state longitudinal data to support regional sector partnerships based on lessons learned from initiatives such as the Vermilion Advantage pilot project.
It will also continue to build the capacity to link to state licensing, industry and professional certification data. This will build on the pilot projects conducted by ICCB by:

- Expanding labor market information by including improved measures of workforce outcomes (job attachment and full quarter earnings) that can be used to benchmark the outcomes for education and training graduates to other Illinois workers.
- Developing longitudinal worker profiles from improved measures for workforce outcomes.
- Developing and implementing a mapping of labor entrants and worker flows across jobs and over time to understand local labor supply and employer demand dynamics.

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

The Illinois data team will work with core partners and the Illinois Chief Information Officer as well as the newly formed Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology, to improve the integration of program and case management systems as applicable to improve service delivery. This team also will work to improve the integration with state longitudinal data systems to support evaluation and continuous improvement.

**B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN**

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

**Alignment with Activities outside the Plan**

The core program activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by the required partners and optional partners by engaging representatives, from all programs at both the state and local levels, to participate in various work groups, working subgroups, regional meetings and weekly webinars, all in an effort to establish and maintain consistent, and clear communication among core and required partners.

As described in our response under Section III.a.1, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) provides oversight and strategic leadership and alignment across the workforce development system, including employment, training, education, human services and other programs, including Registered Apprenticeships and career and technical education. The Interagency Work Group provides operational leadership and alignment across these programs as well. This team has built on and has integrated current state and regional planning initiatives and resources of the state agency partners that administer the required Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs, including the economic development arm of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce).

The IWIB and the Interagency Work Group will expand the strategies outlined in Section III.a.2.A as well as the key initiatives listed below to drive the coordination of program activity, improve the level of service to business and job seekers, increase efficiencies and eliminate duplication. Illinois will continue with the strategy of coordinating regional planning meetings which included partner program staff from each Economic Development Region (EDR).
The purpose of the initial regional meetings was to learn about each partner’s program, review regional demographics and program data and learn to use a data-driven planning approach. These meetings served as the basis of Illinois’ ten WIOA regional plans. Commerce, the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security), the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) are all actively engaged in the coordinated review process of the regional/local plans and the Memorandums of Understanding (MOU).

Alignment with Employment and Training

The Economic Information and Analysis (EI&A) Division of Employment Security will continue to work closely with the workforce, education and economic development partner’s data team to provide labor market information to inform employment and training decisions. Illinois will also measure workforce outcomes using Illinois’ Longitudinal Data System (ILDS). Illinois will implement the best practices from pilot projects such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Talent Pipeline Management with Vermilion Advantage to measure talent pipelines in local areas and determine which of the sector partnerships and career pathways are more effective in their local areas. The ILDS will also be an important mechanism for aligning plan activities with a number of partner activities outside of the plan. In particular, using lessons learned from the WIOA planning process and the data analysis projects of the Higher Education’s Commission on the Workforce, Illinois intends to develop an ILDS agency plan regarding occupational supply/demand data. While Illinois has often produced occupational supply and demand data in conjunction with IWIB workforce development task forces and committees, we recognize the opportunity to develop a sustainable, repeatable occupational supply and demand reporting process for all regions and public, secondary and post-secondary institutions in Illinois.

The IWIB and program partners will continue to work on establishing outcome performance measures that allow partners to see the benefits of certificate and post-secondary degree programs on job stability, as well as earnings, which can be compared to other Illinois workers by comparing the reference group to all Illinois workers by using the Longitudinal Employment Dynamics program (U.S. Census). Employment Security EI&A Division is unique in the nation as having established enhanced measures of workforce outcomes that tie career earnings from the UI Wage Records apart from secondary earnings when employees have wages coming from more than one job. This provides a more accurate reflection of benefits of job training programs.

The state will implement WIOA in conjunction with the Illinois Task Force on Employment and Economic Opportunity for Persons with Disabilities (EEOPD) and as a link to the IWIB to pursue strategies for integration of people with disabilities into employment settings across the state. Linking the IWIB and the Task Force creates an aligned approach to addressing employment barriers to persons with disabilities and creating competitive employment opportunities rather than creating a separate committee of the IWIB. Illinois Title I and Title IV core partners are represented on the Task Force along with representatives of employers, educators, disability advocates and service provider agencies. EEOPD recommendations are now under public review and will be delivered to the Governor and Legislature in the fall of 2016.

The state will also implement WIOA in conjunction with the ApprenticeshipUSA state Accelerator Grants. This initiative will help Illinois build upon existing strategies to expand and diversify Registered Apprenticeship opportunities. These strategies will include convening key industry representatives, state agency leaders and other stakeholders to form strategic partnerships, and elevate apprenticeship as a workforce solution in both traditional and non-traditional industries.
including IT, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, cyber-security, business services and transportation.

**Alignment with Education**

Directly built into the regional planning process is the promotion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships that will reinforce and customize career pathways best practices. As a part of this strategy, Illinois will leverage the WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs), Trade and Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant to further develop work-based learning opportunities across the education and workforce system. In administering the Title IB statewide activities, Commerce is working with the local boards to ensure that the new WIOA innovation initiatives are 1) data-driven by the needs of business and labor market information 2) regionally based and 3) incorporates the staff of the core, required and optional one-stop program partners. The state will make further investment in innovation and technical assistance projects based on the needs identified through this review process. An example of this is WIOA training that was funded by a Statewide Activities grant and coordinated by the Illinois Workforce Partnership. The project provided business outreach and case management training that was made available to all of the core partners.

The state’s educational partners (including Title II Adult Education and Career and Technical Education) are part of the team that will coordinate these efforts at the state, regional and local levels. In addition, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Board of Higher Education will become part of the educational team that will coordinate efforts for customizing career pathway best practices. These identified practices will come from other efforts currently occurring in the state such as those mentioned in 3.1 above as well as the implementation of select recommendations made by relevant groups with an interest in career pathways (e.g. Higher Education Commission on the Future of the Workforce, ICCB Strategic Plan and the Community College Presidents Council. It is anticipated that broader state policy beyond WIOA for the workforce and education systems will be impacted by these approaches.

The ICCB will develop strategies for community colleges to use to strengthen their CTE Business Advisory Councils to be more proactive and employer-led, thereby ensuring that community colleges are aligning training to key industry sectors in each of the ten Economic Development Regions.

**Alignment with Human Services and Other Programs**

WIOA core, required and optional partners, will be directed to educate and train local staff on a continuous basis on services offered by core and required program partners. A key strategy will use technology to produce webinars (WIOA Wednesday Webinars) to provide a platform for all program partners to discuss WIOA topics and build a “library” of information that outlines the required and optional partner’s programs. The webinars provide a forum to educate attendees about all programs, activities and resources, ask questions and offer suggestions on improving collaboration efforts. Illinois hosted a major WIOA planning summit in the winter of 2015 that was coordinated by WIOA core partners. Illinois will build on the success of the 2015 summit to support the state WIOA strategies and provide technical assistance that will improve the workforce system in Illinois.

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

Illinois will expand pilot programs that are successful in coordinating services with Human Services programs including the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) and the Employment Opportunities, Personalized Services, Individualized Training, Career Planning (EPIC) pilot program. Illinois is coordinating resources among agency partners and providers to address the barriers to employment for people with disabilities. DEI is a multi-year project jointly funded by the United States Department of Labor’s (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and Office of Disability Employment Policy, with the goal of testing pilot strategies to improve outcomes for jobs seekers with disabilities. Illinois' Round V DEI project will continue to help Illinois align the workforce system with secondary and post-secondary education to deliver seamless Information Technology Career Pathway services to persons with disabilities during the initial period of this WIOA plan. EPIC is a pilot program with the Illinois Department of Human Services and Illinois Department of Commerce. The program is designed to provide basic and technical skill training and work experience for individuals that are Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD). Participants receive personal career development and team counseling to develop customized accelerated training plans that include job skills training and work-based learning opportunities with local employers that lead to credentials in high-demand fields and employment. This pilot is assisting underemployed and unemployed SNAP recipients in five regions across the State of Illinois and is part of a national study that includes an evaluation process to create strategies to implement with the existing SNAP employment and training program. The goal is to help participants get good jobs, increase earnings and reduce reliance on public assistance.

C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

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

Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals

A key component in coordinating activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high quality customer-centered services, involves a greater integration of services made available to all job seekers on a local and regional level. The integration of services provided by all core and required program partners will also consider the future educational and employment needs of the job seekers serviced throughout Illinois. Expanding the collaboration efforts on methods to improve local service delivery by; improving our assessment of the opportunities and needs of individuals and the labor market in each area; and employer engagement will be key in our efforts to administer high quality, customer-centered services.

Regional Planning Assessment and Analysis

Illinois has developed and promoted an integrated Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) strategic planning process across education, workforce and economic development, which will provide comprehensive, high quality customer-centered services. Part of the regional planning process was to examine targeted population data provided by the state data team and other relevant
local studies. Regional teams examined supply-side data and considered ways to leverage partners’ expertise, programs, and resources to connect various talent pools to career opportunities in targeted industries. The planning process included analysis of how the partners in each region will address the specific needs of the targeted populations and an asset mapping process to inventory the career, education, training and supportive services that are available in each region.

_Governor’s Guidelines and One-Stop Certification_

The State of Illinois will continue to use the Interagency Work Group to develop and recommend policy through the policy process to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) regarding the operational requirements of the Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, including the Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with the required and optional partners. These guidelines require the Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIA) to describe the services that will be provided to individuals and how the services will be coordinated by the required and optional partners. It is anticipated that the State of Illinois will update the Governor’s Guidelines to be compliant with the final WIOA rule. The Governor’s Guidelines and One-stop certification criteria will develop minimum standards for the provision of services including the referral and coordination of training and supportive services. It is anticipated that these standards will also be informed by the benchmarks and performance metrics that are developed by the evaluation efforts of the IWIB and Interagency Work Group. Once these standards are established the state will develop a technical assistance and monitoring strategy to ensure compliance and continuous improvement.

_Labor Market Information & Illinois Pathways_

Labor market information and demand-driven data set the foundation for the WIOA career services in Illinois. Employment Security is responsible for labor market information (LMI) and the Illinois Career Information System, a web-based tool that incorporates Illinois-specific actionable data on in-demand occupations and wages that allow students and job seekers to make informed decisions about their career pathways. These services will result in individualized plans addressing how to reach career goals based on career and skill assessments and identified barriers requiring support services. Illinois Pathways uses these data to provide individuals with research groupings of careers, LMI and the knowledge, skills, abilities and credentials that are required for each occupation. Through partnerships between the State of Illinois’ education and economic development agencies, Illinois Pathways supports local programs that empower students of all ages to explore their academic and career interests. Illinois will leverage the work of statewide, public-private partnerships to better coordinate investments, resources and planning for those programs with the goal of providing more opportunities for targeted individuals.

The workforce and education partners including Adult Education, Career and Technical Education and Illinois State Board of Education will expand career development guides and technical assistance materials to promote leading career pathway models and best practices that can be implemented through regional sector partnerships and other regional sector initiatives. These technical assistance materials (along with associated professional development) will address how to improve career services and expand customer access to accelerated and integrated work-based and classroom training, align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and support services for targeted populations facing barriers to employment. They will also address how to fully mainstream targeted populations into sector-based career pathway initiatives in order to achieve outcomes similar to those of other populations.
Coordinated Case Management and Supportive Services

A key strategy that was outlined in Section III.a.2.A, is the development policies for integrated and enhanced career services and case management. Illinois will incorporate the regional planning process and updated Governor’s Guidelines to drive customer-centered workforce centers that align the available career, education, training and supportive services. Illinois is working to develop case management teams to coordinate and support the delivery of enhanced case management services to participants across the required and optional program partners. As stated in Section III.a.2.A, Activity 4.3, through the Workforce Academy, cross-agency training and professional development will be developed to ensure needs are clearly understood by all partners, both core and required. This includes leveraging the resources of partners such as the ICCB Adult Education to provide professional development to agency partners in the appropriate administration of educational assessment of basic skill deficiencies. Finally, as mentioned earlier, training will be delivered through technological solutions and will be pursued to maximize access and cost-effectiveness.

In an effort to move forward with providing customer-centered services the state will expand on customer workflow studies like the Customer Centered Design Challenge. Several of the core and required program partners collaborated throughout the state and participated in the Customer Centered Design Challenge. The intent of the Customer Centered Design Challenge course is to task all WIOA program partners to rethink how services are administered, with the customer at the center as opposed to laws and regulations. The challenge taken on by the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) team members was to identify “How might we better assist formerly incarcerated individuals obtain employment, education, develop healthy relationships and make positive decisions?” The group was comprised of managers and field office staff from the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Program, Re-entry Employment Service Program, Hire the Future Program, Employer Outreach and Unemployment Insurance Program. The team conducted focus groups and interviews with multiple stakeholders within the re-entry population consisting of job seekers, those currently employed, community organizations and support systems such as family members. It was determined that, while Comprehensive One-Stop Centers offer the services and resources requested, very few stakeholders were aware of the services available. To address this issue, it was concluded that improved methods of outreach and resources should be made available through on-line avenues such as social media, partner web pages and informational videos in resource rooms. Identifying the needs of our customers allows all core partners to collaboratively and simultaneously address the problem of misinformation and lack of information in the re-entry community. The platform of waiting rooms, web pages, and social media will be areas of initial emphasis.

Incorporation of Required Partner Services to Targeted Populations

Illinois will highlight and encourage the adoption of the best practices that are identified in statewide innovation projects that serve targeted populations throughout the state. This will include joint projects between the agencies responsible for administering the required WIOA programs.

- Aligning and implementing the best practices of the current and future Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Projects. Commerce, ICCB, and Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) have worked with regional and local partners to increase the participation of individuals with disabilities (aged 18 and above) in integrated career pathway and academic programs through community colleges and non-profit organizations in cooperation with American Job Centers, Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIB), employment networks and other regional partners.
• Aligning and developing bridge programs for low literacy and low-skilled adults to sequentially bridge the gap between the initial skills of individuals and what they need to enter and succeed in post-secondary education and career path employment. The state’s bridge programs prepare adults (with limited academic or limited English skills) to enter and succeed in post-secondary education and training leading to career path employment in demand occupations. The state agency partners will focus on expanding access and success in sector-based bridge programs that provide opportunities for low-skilled and low literate youth and adults. The state will support new initiatives that promote sector-based pre-bridge, bridge programs and integrated education and training models that expand access and success of low-skilled youth and adults in career pathways. These programs are designed to introduce individuals to career pathway programs of interest. The state recognizes the use of bridge programs as a foundation for career pathway systems and also as a foundation for employment opportunities and other training. ICCB will work closely with core and required partners under WIOA to re-examine the use of bridge programs for those individuals who lack basic skills as a way of connecting with Title I and Title III for training opportunities and with Title IV to ensure those who are basic skill deficient and have learning differences have access to tools needed to be successful.

• Aligning and coordinating WIOA Title I services with efforts that currently address justice-involved youth. Illinois is exploring a range of career pathway models for justice-involved youth seen nationally and statewide as best practices, and examining ways to braid and blend funding for maximum impact. Where possible these models will be folded into existing juvenile justice efforts for seamless service alignment to add the expertise of WIOA service providers to strengthen employment and training models.

• Aligning and coordinating foster youth employment and training programs including youth who are aging out of the foster care system. Commerce and Department of Children and Family Services are developing an initiative to expand career pathway services to older foster youth who are nearing age-out. Successful models for braiding and blending WIOA and Chafee Foster Care funds are under consideration as a basis for Illinois’ effort.

• Aligning and coordinating the critical programs and services for Veterans. Employment Security provides veterans’ employment representatives, who are fellow veterans and specialists in providing employment services. Illinois veterans will be served through the WIOA priority of service as well as targeted initiatives administered by the workforce and education partners and the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs. As the WIOA definition of case management describes, it takes a community of resources to assist these Veterans to overcome/mitigate the identified barriers to employment and get them back in to the workforce.

D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

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

Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers

Under the strategic direction of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), Illinois has embedded sector strategies into workforce development programs across Illinois that support businesses, employees and job seekers. These approaches enable the workforce system to customize solutions
for employers in the industries that are most vital to our economy. Through customized training solutions, employed, unemployed and underemployed workers are better able to obtain the skills they need and that businesses require. Illinois will continue this sector focus in the upcoming program years through activities such as the continued development of a sector-based approach in Illinois.

Coordination of Business Services - Department of Labor Technical Assistance

Illinois received formal technical assistance from the United States Department of Labor’s (DOL) Chicago Regional Office in 2016 to assist with business service integration through an analysis of how business services are currently structured, designed, and delivered across the four core partners in Illinois. This information supports the agencies’ understanding of each other’s work and identifies opportunities to streamline activities and align resources. The project report also identified key components of effective integrated business services as well as promising practices or models related to those elements to support possible replication, in part or whole in Illinois. Those resources will help support the agencies as they move forward with developing an action plan for business services integration.

The report noted that all of the core partners’ business services representatives or their local partners, directly engage with business but the degree of coordination for that engagement varies across the state.

- **WIOA Title I business services** are mainly provided through Local Workforce Innovation Area (LWIA) staff whose responsibilities vary, but typically include outreach to businesses, managing on-the-job training contracts and incumbent worker grants to companies, marketing (often via website and social media), and providing information to companies regarding the offerings available through the workforce system. These services are provided in coordination with the state and local economic development professionals. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) Office of Employment and Training (OET) Program and Planning staff frequently meet with businesses and associations for insight into how to improve local service delivery. The majority of OET staff, however, who engage directly with business are working with the Rapid Response program to support businesses undergoing layoffs by coordinating services to the affected workers. Their work entails building relationships and working with businesses to mitigate the impact of the layoffs and also determine if workforce training services could forestall future layoffs.

- **Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security)** employs state agency staff that engage in business services in most of the local areas across the state that are all co-located in a local workforce center. Employment Security Business Services Managers and Coordinators work with all companies to provide job matching services while IDES’ Veterans’ Employment Representatives work specifically with businesses on behalf of veterans as well as Disabled Veterans’ Employment Representatives who work on behalf of veterans with disabilities.

- **Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)** employs state agency staff that engage in business services in many of the local areas across the state. DRS Employment Resource Specialists (ERS) are specifically charged with engaging with businesses for the purpose of understanding their current and future needs and matching those with clients. They also work to foster an ongoing relationship with business customers to ensure consistent support and services. ERS can provide a variety of services to business to support successful employment of people with disabilities. Services span a
broad spectrum, from consulting and technical assistance to businesses to enhance their disability awareness, to financial support for training and job accommodations.

- Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) does not provide services directly to businesses - those services are provided by local staff in community colleges. Staff employed through community colleges’ Corporate Training Centers also provide a variety of consulting and coaching, but may also develop customized training for specific businesses.

The report made note of the following initiatives to enhance business services, specifically:

- Employment Security Business Services Coordinator role is going through a LEAN process which may result in changes to the position. There is also discussion about alignment between the Business Services Division and the Employment Services Division of Employment Security.
- Commerce is in the process of developing a strategic plan which includes goals and objectives designed to streamline the Office of Employment and Training and LWIA business services as well as improve external partnering and communication.
- DRS is receiving technical assistance through a national effort to improve business engagement across the DRS Vocational Rehabilitation program which should increase staff capacity in this area. This project started in November and is scheduled to last through next year.
- DRS’ development of a CRM tool will provide a better way to track engagement with different industry sectors.
- The Illinois Workforce Partnership (IWP) which is an association of the Illinois LWIAs has planned a series of webinars for state and local areas staff around key topics, including business engagement, which will be held in June 2016.
- ICCB’s current strategic planning work includes elements of service coordination and will enhance the support and dialogue around this issue. (Note: The corporate training report that is underway within ICCB will contain useful information about the business services being provided across the state.)

Support Employer-Driven Regional Sector Initiatives

The coordination of the core, required and optional program partners in each region and local area of the state will be required for Illinois to achieve the goal of coordinated business services. As noted in Section III.a.2.A, the support of employer-driven sector initiatives is a key WIOA strategy. Illinois will expand business engagement across the workforce system in order to align training with needed skills, and to match companies with qualified workers and workforce needs, pointing the state towards the creation of a talent pipeline that fuels economic growth and creates career pathways for all citizens of Illinois.

Illinois will continue to focus on the development of employer-based training options that work directly with businesses to identify hiring requirements, assess the skill levels of job seekers, and provide competency-based training to quickly fill skill gaps, prepare individuals to go to work, and allow employers to increase their productivity while reducing their hiring risk. Using approaches such as apprenticeships, internships, job shadowing, work experience, and on-the-job training provides employers with a quicker method to fill critical job openings while providing trainees with a quicker route to a paycheck.

The Workforce Innovation Fund Round I project (known as Accelerated Training in Manufacturing, or ATIM) provided an opportunity to test strategies intended to deliver improved outcomes for
participants and businesses. Goals in this plan address providing improved career services and improved business services. Based on the promising performance of this project, United States Department of Labor (DOL) Region V recommended to the DOL National Office that Illinois be included in its Sector Strategies Technical Assistance initiative. Beginning in late 2014, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce), Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) and Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) partnered with the support of noted sector strategies expert Lyndsey Woolsey and technical experts at Maher & Maher to create a statewide framework for fostering the development of employer-led sector partnerships. The framework was completed in May 2015, and was followed by regional training events for cross-program local staff and education and training provider partners. The end goal of this framework is to provide meaningful guidance for stakeholders to understand how to foster the development of employer-led partnerships and how to leverage their work to improve services to both businesses and job seekers.

This effort segued directly into a private-sector initiative administered by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation Talent Pipeline Management initiative. These same partners leveraged the experience of developing the sector strategies framework to support an application and subsequent implementation of a grant to Vermilion Advantage, a local employer-led multi-sector public-private partnership. The core premise of Talent Pipeline Management is that businesses must apply supply-chain management principles to talent, and must organize themselves into regional sector-based partnerships in order to nudge the public education and workforce systems into being more nimble and responsive to evolving needs of employers. The following foundational principles of Talent Pipeline Management each provide an opportunity for the core partner programs to explore methods of improving business services.

- Employers play a new leadership role as the end-customer in closing the skills gap for those jobs most critical to their competitiveness.
- Employers proactively organize and manage flexible and responsive talent pipelines in partnership with their preferred education and workforce providers.
- Employers work collaboratively with their partners to develop measures and incentives designed to reinforce and improve performance across all partners.

Likewise, the following Talent Pipeline Management strategies present an opportunity for the core partners to make great use of the new flexibility and emphasis on collaboration and alignment under WIOA.

- Development of employer collaboratives in states or regions;
- Demand planning for critical jobs in key sectors;
- Communication of competency and credentialing requirements;
- Development of employer-centric performance measures and dashboard tools;
- Back-mapping of talent flows for critical jobs in key sectors; and
- Alignment of public and private incentives in states or regions.

Working together and with Vermilion Advantage, this team is currently conducting groundbreaking work on talent flow analysis. This is commonly known as back-mapping, and is used to identify from where employers are sourcing their best candidates and the organizations and programs of study from which those candidates originated. The intent is to raise the performance of all schools and providers to the level of the best performers to create a more robust talent pipeline. In this effort, the state partners have contributed the following in support of the project:
• Commerce - provided coordination of local and state partners and leadership on implementation of sector strategies, demand planning, and communication of occupational competencies;
• Employment Security - provided labor market information (LMI) data and analysis for demand planning and occupational competencies, and information about their Career Information System used by students;
• ICCB - provided data on students dual enrolled in high school and community college and information on how programs of study can become more nimble.

It is anticipated that the lessons learned from the Workforce Innovation Fund (ATIM), Unified Business Services Analysis and the Talent Pipeline Management transform how each program operates by becoming better coordinated and responsive to the needs of business.

E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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

Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions

Illinois’ 48 comprehensive community colleges and multi-college centers play a vital role in the state’s educational, economic development and workforce preparation partnership. Each year, the colleges serve nearly one million residents. The community college system pledges to address workforce development needs with flexible, responsive, and progressive programs designed for colleges and university transfer students, returning adults and expanding adult education and literacy programs. These efforts help with the growing demand for trained workers in various occupations.

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) continues to work collaboratively across the state with other partners to address the alignment of workforce development, education and economic development. Through workforce development, career and technical education and adult education, the Illinois community college system and ICCB have moved forward in a coordinated way, focusing on the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the ICCB Workforce Education Five Year Strategic Plan. Additionally, sector/clusters initiatives such as manufacturing, healthcare and transportation, distribution and logistics with an emphasis on low-skilled and low-income adults through business and industry training, Professional and Continuing Education training, Programs of Study and continued Adult Education initiatives are all focused on meeting the needs of Illinois’ employers and workforce. ICCB’s ongoing partnerships with other agencies and entities such as the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) Office of Employment and Training (OET) are critical to addressing Illinois’ economic and workforce needs.

Coordination with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

ICCB, in partnership with the Illinois Community College Presidents’ Council and Commerce, engaged multiple stakeholders to begin the development of a five-year Workforce Education Strategic Plan. This plan focuses on strengthening system-wide visibility and impact by aligning workforce education and training. The Illinois Community College System Strategic Plan for Workforce Education builds upon current successful efforts and will design creative solutions to
address the challenges of a new economy, high unemployment rate, and the demand for more highly skilled workers. As part of the plan development, ICCB and Commerce held eleven regional forums in the spring of 2015, one in each of the ten Economic Development Regions (EDR) with two in the Northeast region to bring education, workforce and employer partners together to discuss workforce and education issues in their regions and to hear from employers regarding their most pressing concerns. A final report with strategic recommendations will be released in the next few months. The data and information compiled from the regional forums served as a baseline for the WIOA regional planning process.

Coordination with the Illinois Department of Employment Security

Illinois recognizes that labor market information is at the foundation of a job-driven education and training system. As outlined in Section II.a, Illinois’ Interagency Data Team includes the Economic Information and Analysis (EI&A) Division of the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) that produces industry and occupation projections by Local Workforce Innovation Area (LWIA). These projections allow educational institutions to consider in-demand jobs when establishing educational programs and training by LWIA as well as the surrounding areas thereby allocating resources to in-demand occupations and away from those occupations that have declining interest because of changing economic conditions. EI&A also works with educational institutions to measure the workforce outcomes of their students. This allows educational institutions to measure the performance and effectiveness of their programs.

Coordination with the Illinois Department of Human Services

The Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is actively involved in supporting people with disabilities who wish to participate in community college programs in pursuit of a degree or a credential to improve their employment opportunities. In 2016 DRS served 1,750 individuals with disabilities through support for their education and vocational training programs at Illinois community colleges. Since 2011 DRS has operated the Community College Initiative, which provides financial incentives for individuals with disabilities to enroll in community college programs. Since that time enrollment at community colleges has nearly doubled from a baseline of about 900 students. DRS is working with ICCB to facilitate participation by individuals with disabilities, whether or not those individuals are enrolled in the DRS Vocational Rehabilitation program. The two agencies are working in conjunction with the Institute for Community Inclusion to identify strategies for maximizing participation by people with disabilities across the range of programs offered in community colleges.

F. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS.

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

Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers

Community colleges, four-year colleges, universities and other training providers in Illinois play important roles in helping residents pursue credentials that will help them access high-skill, high-wage jobs. Partnerships with high schools ensure graduates are college-ready, and dual credit opportunities, transfer assistance, recognition for prior learning and other innovative approaches...
help learners, particularly low-income individuals, move through the P-20 pipeline. Illinois P-20 Council and the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) play an important role in developing policies and activities that will include engagement with other educational and training providers. The IWIB will work with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce), Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and other partners to develop and implement best practice strategies to require training providers to be demand driven based on labor market information and encourage the use of work-based learning best practices.

The State of Illinois started to lay the groundwork for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act implementation in 2014 through the coordination of a number of roundtable events to help prepare stakeholders (including training providers) for the new program requirements. These regional events highlighted: the importance of work-based learning and strategies for improving business engagement; how-to training to foster the creation of regional employer-led sector partnerships; understanding the differences and commonalities between demand-driven, data driven and employer-led; Illinois Community College Board regional planning linked to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity’s Economic Development Regions; and most recently, WIOA regional planning that leveraged data and relationships developed as part of the ICCB planning. A common theme to link these efforts was a specific emphasis on using these training strategies to support industry sector initiatives. Additional technical assistance will provide the opportunity to develop statewide policy and operationalize the best practices of work-based learning strategies throughout the state.

The regional events, described above were followed by the development of the state’s transitional and final WIOA training provider and training program eligibility policies. These policies serve to connect new and transitioned providers with the state’s WIOA goals and strategies. Providers and programs on the state’s eligible training provider list are only able to train to occupations identified as “in-demand” via the state’s thorough system for identifying appropriate training targets. The state data team will continue to analyze labor market information at the state and regional levels as the critical input to the regional “in-demand” occupational lists. Also, in conformance with the state’s strategy of increasing work-based learning opportunities, the state’s eligible training provider policy states that all Registered Apprenticeship programs registered with the United States Department of Labor (DOL) Office of Apprenticeship or a recognized state apprenticeship agency are automatically eligible to be included as eligible training providers.

*Illinois’ Workforce Innovation Award - Job-Driven Best Practices*

The IWIB and core partners recognize work-based learning as a key strategy that provides more opportunities for workers to earn income while gaining critical job skills. Illinois’ Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing (ATIM) Program is a Workforce Innovation Fund project that was administered in partnership with Commerce, Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security), ICCB and the Illinois Manufacturing Association to implement strategies that were designed to accelerate service delivery and results. Nearly all of the ATIM strategies involved working with community colleges and other private training providers to create a manufacturing job-driven education and training system in the region. The ATIM program design emphasized that, regardless of funding source, it is critical for training programs to: 1) be demand driven based on labor market information, employer projections and employer identified skills; 2) lead to industry-recognized credentials or degrees; and 3) be able to accelerate time to earnings and full worker productivity through a variety of strategies.
While the ATIM project is still underway for the evaluation phase, the training phase of ATIM ended in August 2015. However, the experience gained through this Workforce Innovation Fund project continues to inform Illinois’ Unified State Plan. The IWIB will continue to promote the wider use of the best practices identified under the Workforce Innovation Fund/ATIM project, including having the core partners incorporate the lessons learned and best practices from ATIM (outlined below) when implementing the strategies and activities outlined in this plan.

Provide Training Based on Labor Market Information Demand:

Case managers, community colleges and training providers were given the latest labor market information on manufacturing in their region, and expected to enroll participants only into training for which there was employer demand. The long term goal is to right-size enrollment so that resources are used efficiently and not used in a manner that overproduces students for some skills and under-produces for others. Applying supply-chain principles to talent pipelines promises to be an effective approach for traditional education institutions and other training providers to become closer partners.

Provide Training Based on Skill Requirements:

ATIM went to great lengths to have employers and industry associations verify the occupational competencies necessary to be productive in four of the most common manufacturing occupational groups. Colleges and training providers were then asked to tailor their programs to address the specific skills that were required by the manufacturers. This approach may be applied to any sector or industry. One of the vital deliverables resulting from enhanced business engagement is better communication and understanding between employers and training providers on the specific competencies that are relevant. ATIM demonstrated that educational institutions and other training providers can boost the impact of their partnerships with business and other WIOA programs when they elevate employers from serving on advisory councils to a more dynamic role to ensure educational content provides relevant skills to the number of individuals aligned with projected demand in each region.

Focus on Short-term Industry-recognized Credentials vs. Long-term Degree Programs:

In ATIM, Commerce partnered with the Illinois Manufacturers Association, ICCB and several community colleges to expand the availability of Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC) credential training and testing as well as promoting other nationally portable credentials. The ATIM challenged education and training providers to adapt to meet the needs of individual students and jobseekers on a more personal level and less of a one-size-fits-all approach. For many individuals, especially dislocated workers and adult career changers, spending years in a degree program is not feasible. Offering shorter-term education for stackable, industry credentials is an alternative approach to meeting this need.

Encourage Educational Institutions and training providers to provide options for accelerated training:
For individuals that need to acquire skills as quickly as possible, there are other options beyond pursuing stackable credentials such as open entry / open exit, all-day training, and blended online instruction. Under ATIM, by allowing open entry, some community colleges were able to start training cohorts with as few as two participants. This often saved months by eliminating the need to wait for the next semester, or in some cases, next year to start a program of study. This also reduces the time employers must wait to have access to recently-trained skilled workers.
Promote the application of lean principles, the elimination of processes found to not be value-added, to education and training:

In ATIM community colleges and other training providers were asked to find ways to assess participant’s existing skills and eliminate class time going over material they had already mastered. That time could be better spent on career exploration, work-experience or internships or earning stackable credentials. At the very minimum, local WIOA staff used down-time between sessions for career exploration, short-term work experience and honing interviewing skills. The ATIM met students where they were at and allowed for open exit upon being able to demonstrate mastery of the material and skill.

G. LEVERAGING RESOURCES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

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

Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access

Illinois has developed partnerships to leverage resources and increase educational and training opportunities to individuals with barriers to employment. Illinois will leverage the partnerships with high schools and other educational institutions to ensure that more students are provided with dual credit opportunities, transfer assistance, recognition for prior learning, and other innovative approaches to help learners, particularly low-income individuals, move through the P-20 pipeline.

Under the leadership of the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), Illinois has expanded policies to require all adult education providers to offer bridge program instruction related to high demand occupations. Bridge programs offer students cluster level knowledge and skills while building basic literacy skills, career exploration and awareness, as well as support services that assist the student accessing post-secondary education and pathway employment. Through this policy, bridge program delivery has expanded to more than 60 programs. The remaining programs are working to partner to develop services to students. Comprehensive professional development activities have been developed to increase the knowledge of adult educators in the development of contextualized bridge career pathway programs.

ICCB administers over $30 million annually in state and federal Post-secondary Perkins grants to community colleges in support of career and technical education (CTE) programs and students across the state. Perkins’ intent is to provide students with the academic and technical skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century knowledge and skills-based economy and to gain employment in a high-skill, high-wage and high-demand occupation. It focuses on certain themes such as increasing state and local accountability standards, integrating academic and technical education, strengthening the connections between secondary and post-secondary education and restructuring the way stakeholders - high schools, community colleges, universities, business and parents - work together. ICCB will continue to support community colleges in the implementation of CTE-related programs and activities including academic and career guidance services.

Illinois will continue to invest in adult education initiatives to provide the opportunity for adult education students to earn industry recognized credentials, college certificates and college credit while studying to obtain the high school equivalency certificate or learn the English language. Through the Integrated Education and Training (IET) program in Illinois, Integrated Career and
Academic Preparation System (ICAPS), many students will be connected to Title I to ensure they have the services necessary to gain access to resources for training and employment opportunities upon completion.

**Illinois Workforce Innovation Fund**

Illinois will implement the best practices from the $12 Million Illinois Workforce Innovation Fund initiative, Accelerated Training in Manufacturing that demonstrated the feasibility of providing accelerated training for industry credentials that incorporated lean principles and multiple modes of work-based learning. Several community colleges (Harper College, Lake Land College, Richland Community College and Danville Area Community College, among others) and private training providers, such as Symbol Training Institute, have each found innovative ways to improve responsiveness to businesses and job seekers. The core partners each have access to funding that can be used to incent colleges and trainers to adopt these best practices and/or help reduce the out-of-pocket cost to job seekers in need of education and technical skill upgrades.

**Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant Program**

In Illinois, Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants include local and regional teams made up of various partners - and led by community colleges. Through this grass-roots strategy, specific regional sector needs have been addressed, such as advanced manufacturing. Additionally Illinois received awards in the green economy, bio-energy and a multi-state initiative along the Mississippi River. Known as MRTL, the Mississippi River Transportation, Logistics and Distribution Consortium is committed to advancing economic development in the Mississippi River region, from the headwaters to the Gulf and are dedicated to the placement of dislocated and other workers in high wage, high skill occupation in Transportation and Distribution Logistics and related industry sectors. Illinois has been very successful with TAACCCT both in terms of the ability to address specific sector needs and in terms of generating grant dollars and in bringing diverse partners together to address economic and workforce needs in the state and in partnership across state borders.

**Supporting Individuals with Barriers to Employment**

Illinois is also supporting the development of proposals to design new approaches to connect individuals with barriers to employment to education and training resources. One example is a proposed initiative to expand access to careers in information technology to at-risk in-school and out-of-school youth with learning disabilities. A proposal to do this is being prepared for submission to the National Science Foundation under its “Advancing Informal STEM Learning” initiative. Illinois’ approach will involve community-based organizations in the provision of informal instructional settings for this population, and conduct research on diverse learning content and tools, such as gaming software and online learning tools based on brain science technology, such as CompTIA’s CertMaster learning tools. CompTIA has been a key resource and partner in developing this proposal. This work will be overseen by the new Youth Standing Committee of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB). The Committee’s initial focus will be on implementing the recommendations of the IWIB’s Disadvantaged Youth Task Force. These include core criteria for the development of career pathway systems, particularly for the most disadvantaged learners. Providing technical assistance to the field and selecting regional pilot projects will be major early foci of this committee.
The state’s P-20 system represents another opportunity to increase access to educational resources for school-age youth. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) and ICCB are participating in the Northern Illinois P-20 Network, a group of 12 community colleges, 16 school districts, five state agencies and six educational organizations who are focused on improving college and career success for students. A Workforce Development Team was created within this network to help identify strategies to better connect educational and workforce systems and resources. The three objectives of the Workforce Development Team include:

- Recommend resources and strategies to help academic institutions and planners understand and use available workforce data,
- Continue development and testing of student-centered career pathways information tied to regional industry needs, and
- Strengthen the connection between educational performance and broader statewide workforce outcomes by identifying educational metrics that align with WIOA, the 60 by 20 Network, Illinois Pathways and other relevant initiatives.

Commerce has approached Northern Illinois University, the convener of the Northern Illinois P-20 Network about how to form regional P-20 networks in other parts of the state that can similarly address the integration of education, workforce and economic development.

H. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

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

**Improving Access to Post-secondary Credentials**

A key to a robust career pathways system is that portable, stackable credentials are incorporated fully into the system, particularly at the post-secondary level. Fortunately, in Illinois, the incorporation of portable, stackable credentials has been an ongoing commitment of the post-secondary career and technical education system since the implementation of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act (Perkins IV). Illinois Career and Technical Education (CTE) provides students with the academic and technical skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century knowledge and skills-based economy. Students participating in these programs are held to specific and reliable industry-based learning standards to ensure that they are fully prepared for both post-secondary education and the high-wage, high-skill and high-demand career of their choice.

Illinois recognizes that CTE students at a community college do not always fit the model of transition implied in the Perkins IV definition. Thus, the agency moved early to adopt a more holistic career pathways approach to implementation. For example, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) CTE division partnered with Adult Education to develop an Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS). The purpose is to provide integrated CTE and Adult Education instruction, so adult students can earn at least one “stackable,” credit-bearing, post-secondary education credential as well as industry-recognized credentials that lead to high-wage employment in Illinois. In integrated programs career and technical educators teach integrated classes alongside adult education instructors, ensuring that students receive not only integrated curriculum inclusive of basic skills enhancements, but also curriculum tied to the latest in industry standards developed in partnership with employers.
ICCB will continue to participate in initiatives to promote career pathway programs in Adult Education, including the Jobs for the Future initiative “Accelerating Opportunity (AO).” This initiative focuses on a blending of both adult education and Career and Technical Education instruction to provide an integrated model of instruction using a team teaching approach. Both the Adult Education and Career Technical Education Divisions of ICCB have partnered on this project and have worked to expand the number of colleges from eight to twenty-five. The initiative allows adult learners, without a high school diploma, the opportunity to gain college level credit and certificates, including college and industry-recognized credentials around in-demand occupations while working toward learning English, high school equivalency and/or increasing basic skills.

ICCB also plays an essential role in overseeing the development, delivery, and evaluation of dual credit across the state. Dual credit refers to a course that is taken by a qualified high school student for which the student receives both high school and college credit. While dual credit significantly impacts students (by reducing college costs, speeding time to degree completion, and easing the transition from high school to college); it also maximizes state and local resources and promotes collaboration between secondary and post-secondary education institutions. As a leader in dual credit, the ICCB works collaboratively with secondary and post-secondary stakeholders to expand student access to higher education while simultaneously maintaining the high academic standards expected of the Illinois Community College System. In an effort to support and augment dual credit programs around the state, the ICCB has supported the dual credit enhancement grant. This grant encourages the creation and implementation of innovative strategies in the areas of: dual credit offerings, curriculum alignment, instructional models, faculty recruitment efforts and professional development.

**Improving Access to Registered Apprenticeships**

Illinois will leverage the Apprenticeship USA State Accelerator Grant to further integrate apprenticeship opportunities into the required and optional program partners throughout the state. The Governor has mobilized a broad cross-section of apprenticeship stakeholders to drive this important planning process. Representing a range of perspectives and resources, these individuals have agreed to serve on the new Illinois Apprenticeship Committee (a standing committee of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB)) and will oversee this planning effort and continue into implementation. Members of this Committee include representatives of the IWIB, the four WIOA core state agency partners, business and industry, training providers, Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIB), labor, philanthropies, community colleges, rehabilitation services and employment exchange services.

The use of apprenticeships will be encouraged through demonstration projects, policy guidance and technical assistance. With increased attention on various forms of work-based learning, it is expected that the number of apprenticeships will expand as WIOA is implemented. Illinois will learn from the best practices and expand on programs such as the:

- Illinois Manufacturers’ Association Education Foundation Advanced Apprenticeship Consortium project that will serve more than 7,000 collectively through apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship and career pathway programs in the State of Illinois. To leverage funding, apprenticeships will be embedded within Illinois Pathways, the state’s public-private career pathway system initiative.
- ICCB Highway Construction Careers Training Project that prepares minority and low-income individuals to enter apprenticeship programs.
At their last meeting on July 27, 2016, the committee agreed that Illinois should apply for implementation funding available through the ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grant. They are focusing not only on the expansion of Registered Apprenticeships, but on the pipeline to Registered Apprenticeship represented by youth apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships and some types of customized employer-based training.

I. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES.

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

Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies

Coordination of Regional and Local Planning

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) is the state agency that leads economic development efforts for Illinois and is responsible for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title IB and Trade Training Program activities. It is recognized that supporting innovative workforce programs that connect employers to a highly skilled workforce is central to Illinois' commitment to ensure that businesses thrive in Illinois. Commerce is also responsible for the administration of the required and allowed Governor’s Statewide Workforce Activities as outlined in WIOA. The state is coordinating a data/demand-driven strategic planning process across education, workforce and economic development at the state, regional and local levels using Illinois’ ten Economic Development Regions (EDR). The use of the ten EDRs illustrates Illinois’ commitment to data-driven economic development in the state. Commerce's Regional Economic Development Regional Managers and supporting staff are responsible for managing business relationships, developing business plans and cultivating customer relationships and company growth in their assigned regions or territories. The goal is to provide a one-stop resource focus on providing customized services to business including:

- Intergovernmental Coordination
- Technical Assistance with Site Selection
- Regional Collaboration with Key Stakeholders
- Assistance Eliminating Governmental Red Tape
- Custom Workforce Training
- Expedited Permitting, Licensing & Other Approvals
- Connection to Civic & Business Partners
- Potential Financial Support

Commerce will also connect the core and required partners with the latest economic development initiatives in the state. For example the State of Illinois, in partnership with Intersect Illinois and the Illinois Economic Development Association is introducing a new statewide business outreach and retention initiative called, CORE: Creating Opportunities for Retention and Expansion. The first step in this process is to conduct in-depth training sessions designed to explain this statewide alliance, instruct communities on specific steps of participation and to coordinate specific measures aimed at meeting the growth and development needs of local/regional employers. A key goal of this initiative is to better coordinate and communicate with business. These activities are in direct alignment with the regional planning, business coordination and sector strategies outlined in this plan.

Coordination of Economic Development Activities and Business Services
Illinois’ regional planning process consistently highlighted the need to align and integrate economic development and business services at the state, regional and local levels. Illinois responded by requesting consultant support from the United States Department of Labor’s (DOL) Chicago Regional Office to integrate the business services design and operations. The resulting 2016 Illinois Integrated Business Service Environmental Scan report recommended that the state develop a business services framework that considered the following key elements:

- **A sectors-based approach** - As a result of WIOA regional planning work across the state, each Economic Development Region has identified target industry sectors. The work of the unified business services team in each region should align around their region-specific industry sectors.

- **From transactional to transformative** - Much of the current work with businesses across the state are based on a transactional approach - processing job orders, coordinating on-site recruitment events, and more. While these tasks will continue to be important components of service delivery, the overall engagement of businesses should take on a transformational focus that provides a platform for regular and ongoing dialogue.

- **Regional in nature** - Service delivery should be regional in nature and align with the regional designations identified by the Governor for WIOA, which are the ten Economic Development Regions. The core partners should look at the pros and cons of aligning, to the extent possible, their geographic boundaries in order to remove this as a barrier to coordinated service delivery.

- **Consideration of federal statutory mandates** - Three of the four core partners have a federal mandate to provide specific, related services. Because these federal requirements are spread across three agencies, coordination is a bit more difficult and thus needs to be taken into account when developing the state framework.

- **Coordinated approach** - The framework should describe a coordinated approach to business services and suggest a process for determining which partner is going to serve as the point of contact for particular businesses/industries and how the point of contact will coordinate with other partners to meet business needs.

- **Co-located staff** - Building upon efforts already underway, continue efforts to co-locate in WorkNet Centers to ensure maximum coordination between partners.

- **Policies that each of the four agencies will adopt including coordinated program and staff performance measures.** This may mean that existing policies/procedures need to be reviewed and revised to ensure alignment.

- **Again, it is critical for local partners to be engaged in the creation of the framework to ensure that it provides enough guidance to be helpful but also allows enough flexibility to allow regional innovation and customization. Businesses, as well, need to be engaged in the creation of the framework.**

The Interagency Work Group has reviewed the DOL technical assistance report and has recommended that each of the core agencies obtain a formal commitment from the agency directors to move forward to develop a joint vision of unified business services in Illinois.

**Support Employer-Driven Regional Sector Initiatives**

Illinois has embraced the concept of employer-led sector partnerships as a viable means of becoming more nimble in meeting the needs of business. Commerce, the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) have been collaborating on sector strategies for years, including our Workforce Innovation Fund manufacturing project, creating the state sector strategy framework and most recently the Talent
Pipeline Management Initiative. Illinois is currently working to expand the successful pilot with Vermilion Advantage in the East Central Illinois region to other regions of the state.

As noted above, Commerce’s regional economic development staff actively engaged in the regional workshops and planning meetings and will continue to be key resources in connecting workforce and education professionals with key businesses in targeted industry sectors. Commerce’s regional economic development team will take a more active role in working with local workforce and education partners to implement regional sector strategies in key industries and bringing more businesses to the planning table.

Provide Career Pathways for Economic Advancement

Commerce, Employment Security, ICCB and the Illinois Department of Human Services’ Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) Interagency Data Team will continue to provide an analysis of economic and labor market information to the state and local economic development professionals. It is vital that local economic development staff have the most current macro-level data, but also work with us to share micro-level data and the vision they have for their communities. The Interagency Data Team will play an important coordinating role to foster better intra-regional communication (such as through WIOA regional planning) so that as many communities as possible within a region have a similar vision that can be used to leverage the efforts of all. The state and local economic development professionals play an important role in working with business to validate and refine the labor market information (LMI) based on the current needs of business in the region and local areas.

Expand Employer Access to Labor Market Information

The Interagency Data Team will develop new opportunities for employers to communicate their forecasted demand for workers and review and provide input into industry and occupational projections developed through Employment Security. This will include new tools for employers working together in leading regional partnerships to continuously communicate short-term forecasts of job openings and competency and credentialing requirements for these jobs. This will build the best practices from employer-led national and state initiatives, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Talent Pipeline Management Initiative. The team also will improve employer capacity to easily communicate career opportunities and current job openings to regional partnerships and their broader labor market in Illinois. This will be accomplished through employer tools that can be easily integrated with their current human resource information systems and their own websites that provide information on careers and job openings.
B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in Section II Strategic Elements. This includes—
1. THE STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE’S STRATEGIES. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF—

A. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGIES (E.G., LABOR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS, DATA SYSTEMS, COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS, CASE-MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, JOB BANKS, ETC.).

One significant challenge is that no mechanism currently exists to allow all core program partners to track participant exits across all programs. An interagency subgroup working with Illinois’ Chief Information Officer is exploring the development of a common information system using the existing Illinois Framework for Healthcare and Human Services. Ongoing discussions include the possibility of adapting that framework for WIOA purposes, including tracking participant exits from all programs. Two initiatives that will support this effort are the Longitudinal Data System and Workforce Data Quality Initiative.

Partners established a common vision and built the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) with data sharing agreements with universities and others to ensure consistently high levels of quality, reliability and security in matching and managing participant-level data across agency and university partners. The LDS Agencies and the Governing Board have made substantial progress on activities that relate to the LDS Functions in 2014-15. As detailed in this Section, this progress includes:

- Development and adoption of the Initial Annual Report and Plan;
- A number of intraagency enhancements that support the broader LDS effort;
- Existing Illinois Framework for Healthcare and Human Services. Ongoing discussions include the possibility of adapting that framework for WIOA purposes, including tracking participant exits from all programs. Two initiatives that will support this effort are the Longitudinal Data System and Workforce Data Quality Initiative.

- The selection and establishment of the Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator;
- Significant work and accomplishments in the end-user service priorities established by the Governing Board.
- Illinois currently participates in the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI), to improve the linkages between education, workforce development and human services data systems that build from current education state longitudinal data system initiatives through a common identifier system and data quality and security framework and shared applications.

B. DATA-COLLECTION AND REPORTING PROCESSES USED FOR ALL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THOSE PRESENT IN ONE-STOP CENTERS*.

Illinois does not yet have an integrated data system but is committed to pursuing alignment and integration of participant and performance data across core programs with the ultimate goal of providing effective and efficient services that leads to the participants’ employment as quickly as possible.
To help prepare for and explore options for data integration, an interagency performance subgroup of the Interagency Work Group is focused on performance accountability and data integration. Core program partner representatives have identified existing gaps between the data currently collected and the data required to be collected under WIOA. Core partners established priorities and strategies for addressing those gaps, including identifying the following:

- Actions core partners can take now to adjust their own data systems in preparation for new performance accountability requirements under WIOA;
- Data collection methods and standards that are best practices in some core program partners and could be explored for use by other core program partners (e.g., how to account for participants who lack a Social Security number when reporting performance outcomes);
- Potential platforms for developing a common framework for use by all required partners under WIOA;
- Development of a dashboard for core program partners to track individual and aggregate performance data across core programs;
- Mechanisms for facilitating smart referrals and allowing core program partners to share information directly with each other’s systems; and
- Items which require additional Federal guidance, such as these examples: o Consistency of measurable skills gains in terms of the necessity of standardized tools and procedures between core programs for assessing participant skills and the time period over which skills gains are to be measured; and o Additional definition of “effectiveness serving employers” so core program partners can prepare to demonstrate such effectiveness.

The Illinois core partners already have long-standing data sharing agreements in place whereby the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce), Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) request data matching of the Unemployment Insurance Wage Record Data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security). WIOA has motivated the agencies to look closely at the long-term agreements and determine if changes need to be made to accommodate the new and innovative sharing of data between the agencies. The agreements facilitate cross-program access to data about common participants while minimizing duplicative systems costs. In addition to one-on-one data access the Illinois Longitudinal Data System and the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) fully executed a multiple agency data sharing agreement with all the state of Illinois educational and workforce agencies. This data sharing agreement allows for the sharing of agency data via the new established Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator (CDDA). The interagency agreements and the CDDA arrangement establishes a master client index number for all clients and facilitates integrated and streamlined service delivery, common reporting and measurement of interagency longitudinal performance outcomes as required under WIOA Section 116(d)(2).

Illinois will continue to use existing web-based interfaces that integrate data via Application Program Interface (API) tools. Real-time access to workforce development resources for individuals, businesses and workforce professionals is available, shareable and viewable in user-friendly dashboards for better customer service. Ongoing discussions include how to further integrate the Internet-based data systems to enhance program alignment and service delivery.

- Currently the Illinois workNet portal connects individuals and businesses to workforce services and data. The new Beta version of the portal serves as a hub for WIOA implementation resources and guidance for all required programs. The open source and
widget technology available in the new version allows for maximum agility in on-demand program development and implementation needs.

- Employment Security administers the IllinoisJobLink (IJL) system to collect data on job seeker and employer customers. IllinoisJobLink.com is an internet-based system with a centralized job search engine and resume service that integrates workforce customer information to facilitate coordination of services across partner programs.

- The Illinois Community College Board—Adult Education administers the Illinois Data and Information System (DAIS-i), which is a web-based system that collects relevant student level record data on education, attendance, courses and employment data needed for reporting to WIOA.

The Illinois Governor’s Office is actively assisting the core partners in technology interoperability solutions. Assessments of current systems have begun and additional research and analysis will be necessary prior to committing one solution for the state. Further discovery is needed and attention made to mold the technology plan with the state WIOA plan so that policy drives the state technology. This action will ensure long-term success and sustainability of a WIOA Unified State Plan and workforce system.

* For the PY 2016 state plan, descriptions of data collection and reporting processes need only include currently known indicators.

State of Illinois Policies

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), along with Illinois’ core agency partners have developed and issued several Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) state policies since WIOA was enacted in 2014. These policies provide the guidance for the workforce activities grantees and state agency partners in such areas as general transition to and implementation of WIOA, designation of Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIA), Chief Elected Official (CEO) agreements and functions, local workforce board composition and certification, eligible training providers and their programs, and eligibility for youth, dislocated worker and adult populations.

The WIOA core partners, who make up the Interagency Work Group, have worked with the IWIB, its Executive Committee and Interagency Work Group to review WIOA regulations, to discuss its effects on the workforce, education and economic development systems and to develop plans to implement the required provisions.

Going forward, the IWIB is implementing a collaborative policy advisory process that will involve its members, WIOA partners, and stakeholders in revisiting WIOA interim policies and developing new WIOA policies. The intention is to make WIOA policy development in Illinois more collaborative and ensure that it yields cost-effective and efficient guidance to the field.

Furthermore, the state has requested input from the local area grantees, Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIB) and training and service providers, utilizing a number of methods. The coordinated effort assures input from all stakeholders to ensure continuity and consistency among the programs, even in instances where a policy is specific to only one of the partner’s programs.

As a way to (a) determine whether the Illinois WIOA Unified State Plan and other WIOA requirements are being carried out effectively, and (b) identifying continuous improvement opportunities in the effectiveness and efficiency of Illinois’ workforce development system as well as policy, the IWIB created an Evaluation and Accountability Committee. A proposed scope for this Committee will be discussed at the next full IWIB meeting in September 2016. It will include recommending tools, measures, and strategies. This committee will also serve as a resource to other IWIB committees in establishing standards and metrics to assess and continuously improve system and program performance.
More specifically, the following policies have been developed and issued through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) Office of Employment and Training (OET):

- Guidance was issued to provide the workforce system with an overview of the steps Commerce has taken to implement the provisions of WIOA. This insured a seamless transition for customers during intake and the continued provision of career and training services, including the expanded training services described in WIOA. This guidance also addressed reporting requirements during and after the transition period as changes to the workforce data reporting system are being made.

- Membership and certification of LWIBs under WIOA is governed under policies that are consistent with the new provisions - including the assurance of more streamlined boards with a majority of business members and minimum percentage of labor and community service organizations represented. Emphasis was placed on ensuring the business representatives reflect regional industry sectors and the diversity of the population.

- Policy was implemented to address CEOs in each local area, including an understanding of their required functions as confirmed through a CEO agreement. The agreement addresses those LWIAs that have multiple CEOs. CEOs are given authority, as the local grant recipient, to designate local grant subrecipients and fiscal agents for the Title IB funds of WIOA. It also defines each CEO’s liability for WIOA funds determined to have been misspent or used for unallowable purposes.

- Eligibility policies have been written to ensure that all of the requirements of WIOA are clearly outlined for the LWIAs and their staff providing the intake and registration of customers. All customers of the system, whether served by local one-stop staff, through technology, or self-served, are included in the general eligibility policy. Those seeking more than self-service assistance are determined eligible based on the funding stream they will be served under. Detailed descriptions of the eligibility requirements and documentation sources allowed confirming such eligibility decisions provide guidance to career planners in their decision-making. Priority of service is emphasized throughout to ensure veterans’ preference is provided over non-veterans who might otherwise be determined eligible under a particular program.

- WIOA policy has been issued to provide guidance to all training providers - including new providers, those that previously provided transitional eligibility, the LWIBs and LWIAs - on the process for determining eligibility of providers and training programs. The policy includes initial and continued eligibility of all providers, with separate guidance for those Registered Apprenticeships choosing to be added to the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). This list highlights those programs that meet the state’s requirements for in-demand occupations. The current procedures are under review by a work group to address the performance collection requirements for ALL students, streamline the current approval process for eligibility and make suggestions for changes to the reporting system.

- Recently, the IWIB approved new procedures for communications between the board, its Executive Committee, and the Interagency Work Group especially as they pertain to the continued implementation of WIOA. Specifically, this guidance informed the Illinois workforce system how to implement WIOA statutory requirements for the upcoming Program Year 2016 (PY’16) beginning July 1, 2016. It also provides guidance and instructions regarding the PY’16: 1) regional and local planning requirements, 2) Governor’s Guidelines to State and Local Program Partners Negotiating Costs and Services under WIOA, and 3) Criteria and Procedures for Certifying Comprehensive One-Stop Centers under WIOA. This guidance provided a framework for program activities.
• Under a work group structure, Illinois has begun development of new policy to address the types of training services allowed under WIOA. The first of these training options was on-the-job training (OJT) for which recent policy was issued. General requirements for all OJTs outline the guidance for potential new employees or eligible underemployed workers that provide an opportunity for acquisition of new skills or knowledge essential to job performance. To ensure proper implementation, LWIBs are required to set policy for OJTs. Monitoring and evaluation guidance assures further accountability.

• Additional policies, such as co-enrollment, universal intake and cross-program scorecards will be released upon review and analysis of the WIOA final regulations.

Development of the Governor’s Guidelines

The IWIB was consulted regarding the work of the Interagency Work Group on the “Governor’s Guidelines to State and Local Program Partners for Negotiating Costs and Services under WIOA” to fulfill the WIOA requirement that the Governor issue guidance to state and local partners for negotiating cost sharing (including determining equitable and stable methods of funding infrastructure in accordance with WIOA Section 121(h)(1)(B)), service access, service delivery and other matters essential to the establishment of effective local workforce development services under WIOA ($678.705). The Governor’s guidelines address: negotiation of local Memorandums of Understanding (MOU), negotiation of infrastructure costs, negotiation of local one-stop delivery system costs, timelines for negotiation of MOUs and infrastructure costs and reporting of interim and final negotiation outcomes and appeals processes. The state expects all required and optional partners to adhere to these guidelines. LWIBs and CEOs are to act in accordance with the guidelines and to otherwise comply with them. The scope of the Governor’s guidelines include:

1. Establish general guidance, direction and requirements for negotiating local MOUs that are required in each LWIA to support the operation of the local one-stop delivery system.
2. Provide guidance related to comprehensive one-stop center infrastructure costs, including guidance for budgeting, allocation and negotiation of these costs using the two funding methods WIOA prescribes.
3. Provide guidance for identifying and negotiating local one-stop delivery system costs that will be shared among required partners.
4. Prescribe timelines for local negotiation of MOUs and for reporting of the outcomes of these negotiations.
5. Outline requirements for the process through which required partners can appeal decisions made in the application of these guidelines if the state infrastructure cost funding mechanism is used.

Additionally, the Governor’s guidelines include service matrices for career services and other programs and activities, demonstrating how career services and other programs are available through the local comprehensive one-stop centers by required partner. To provide uniformity across the LWIAs, an MOU template is included in the Governor’s guidelines. This template provides the structure and elements of the MOU, providing placeholders for each LWIA to add their respective content. The Governor’s guidelines will be updated to address the recent release of the WIOA final rules.
3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

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

STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION Organizational charts for each of the core partners are available at: https://www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan.
Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) is the state agency that leads economic development efforts for Illinois. The main focus of Commerce is to retain and create jobs in Illinois by marketing to:

- Existing businesses, encouraging them to reinvest and create more jobs for Illinois citizens;
- New businesses, inviting them to relocate, invest and create new jobs;
- International companies, positioning Illinois as a global business destination for Foreign Direct Investment;
- Entrepreneurs and investors, connecting resources to support their startups and ventures;
- Locally and globally, promoting Illinois as a world-class tourism and film destination.

Commerce works with businesses, local governments and community organizations to advance economic development and improve the state’s competitiveness in the global economy.

Commerce is organized into the following offices that are focused on economic growth for the State of Illinois:

- Business Development: Administers job creation/retention grants, loans and tax credit programs;
- Employment and Training: Oversees statewide workforce training system, and promotes and coordinates initiatives to bridge skills gaps;
- Community Development: Utilizes federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding to administer community infrastructure, housing and disaster recovery funding programs;
- Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology: Catalyzes local, national and global partnerships including the Small Business Development Center network and the Advantage Illinois program that strengthen Illinois’ competitive advantage;
- Regional Economic Development: Integrates economic development activities and outreach across the state;
- Energy and Recycling: Promotes investment in Illinois’ green economy, as well as create energy and recycling policies for state facilities;
- Film: Promotes the state’s film and theatre industry through tax incentives, including the Illinois Film Tax Credit;
- Tourism: Markets state travel opportunities domestically and internationally, contributing to over $2 billion in state and local tax revenues annually;
- Trade and Investment: Promotes Illinois’ economy through outreach events and trade missions, and provides financial and technical exporting assistance to Illinois companies;
- Urban Assistance: Manages the Urban Weatherization Initiative, targeting homes in disadvantaged communities and training home energy technicians, and the Employment Opportunities Grant program, which trains participants in the construction trade industry; and
- Energy Assistance: Enables low income households to maintain utility services through programs to reduce energy costs through improved energy efficiency.

Office of Employment and Training

Supporting innovative workforce programs that connect employers to a highly skilled workforce is central to Illinois’ commitment to ensure that businesses thrive in Illinois.
The Office of Employment and Training (OET) oversees the administration of the WIOA Title IB Programs, WIOA statewide activities including rapid response and the training component of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act Program. Key units of the OET include Planning, Policy, Performance, Monitoring, Reporting, Rapid Response, Trade and Technical Assistance.

Coordination with Economic Development

Commerce is responsible for ensuring that economic development activities are integrated with the workforce strategies outlined in II.c.1. Over the last decade there has been a steady, deliberate move to integrate economic and workforce development services at the state, regional and local levels. At the state level, Commerce’s Business Development, Regional Economic Development Offices and OET collaborate to respond to the needs of business and industry in Illinois. This collaboration has accelerated over the last year under the leadership of the Governor and Commerce Director. There have been multiple informational briefings between offices and a marked increase in the use of cross-cutting teams to bring additional perspective and resources to bear on efforts of business retention, layoff aversion and business expansion. Establishing, maintaining and expanding these relationships are critical to the successful implementation of the workforce strategies and activities.

Coordination with Community Development

Commerce’s Bureau of Community Development oversees the employment and training programs under the Community Services Block Grant Program funding. The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program provides federal funding to Illinois’ 36 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to carry out locally designed programs providing a range of services and activities that have measurable impacts on the causes and effects of poverty. The CSBG program assists low income populations with transportation, clothing, health services, food, shelter and programs designed to increase self-sufficiency, such as job preparedness, education and housing assistance. Small business loans are also available with CSBG funding. Commerce will use the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) state, regional and local planning process to better align and integrate this program into the workforce and education system to strengthen Illinois’ communities.

Illinois Community College Board

Title II of WIOA is funded through the U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) and is administered by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). Title II of WIOA reauthorizes and enhances the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AELA). The purpose of Title II is to:

- Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency;
- Assist adults who are parents to obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children; and lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their families;
- Assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to post-secondary education and training, through career pathways; and
- Assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in improving their:
  - Reading, writing, speaking and comprehension skills in English;
  - Mathematics skills; and
Acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom and the responsibilities of citizenship.

The eligible population to be served under Title II include individuals who have attained 16 years of age; who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law; and

- is basic skills deficient;
- do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
- are English language learners.

The ICCB recognizes the core purpose of Adult Education is to prepare individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in post-secondary education and the workforce. Two ways that this can be accomplished is through the Alignment Activities and Establishment of High Quality Adult Education System.

Illinois Department of Employment Security

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) is responsible for administering the Wagner-Peyser Program, Title III. The intent of the Wagner-Peyser Program is to sustain economic growth by meeting the needs of job seekers, increase awareness of resource providers, and expand employment opportunities. Each Employment Security location provides employment services to all populations. Employment Security collaborates with our local workforce partners, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, local/state representatives, educational institutions, and other organizations to assist job seekers in finding employment and helping employers find qualified workers. Employment Security offers job placement, individual employment assessments, an online job application process, and job search and placement services.

Employment Service representatives are charged with increasing community awareness about Employment Security programs via job fairs, resource events, community collaborations, onsite recruitments, resource linkage and presentations. Through outreach services, the Employment Service staff are able to connect to those that do not come into our office for services. Representatives are also charged with creating relationships with local leaders to ensure they are aware of Employment Security programs and are able to collaborate with all activities to promote community awareness, use of resources and employment opportunities.

Economic Information and Analysis Division (EI&A)

Employment Security is the preeminent source for labor market and career information in Illinois. Employment Security has cooperative agreements with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (USBLS) to provide statewide and sub-state employment, unemployment, occupation and wage information. In addition, Employment Security has a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor’s (DOL) Employment and Training Administration to provide ten year and twenty year statewide and sub-state industry and occupational employment projections. These data products serve as the cornerstone for the Career Information System, a web-based tool for students and job seekers to identify Illinois in-demand jobs and make informed choices about future career pathways.
Division of Business Services

The Employment Security Business Services Division delivers professional employer engagement, with a focus on servicing our veteran community. This team is comprised of Business Service Managers, Business Service Coordinators, Veteran Program Representatives and special program advocates. Each serves collectively to deliver services and programs to the business and job seeker community. Employer engagement throughout Illinois is accomplished through personal business relationships with chambers of commerce, industry associations, economic groups and community-based organizations. Employer workshops are held, highlighting topics such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC)/State Tax Credits, Federal Fidelity Bonding Program, and Apprenticeship programs. In addition to daily employer interactions, Employment Security provides training on Illinois Job Link (IJL), which is the data platform that assists employers in meeting their job candidate needs.

Opportunities for Individuals with Barriers to Employment

Wagner-Peyser staff, in conjunction with the Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Reemployment Services Program (RES), conducts workshops which target the needs of customers that may have a difficult time finding employment. Topics for the workshops include how to perform an effective job search, resume writing and cover letters, interviewing skills, labor market and career choice tools and tips on how to use IllinoisJobLink.com (IJL). Specialized workshops are held for military veterans, youth and ex-offenders.

Employment Security promotes employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and encourages employers to hire these individuals for job openings. Employment Security hosts and participates in hiring events and workshops across the state for individuals with disabilities in coordination with Central Management Services (state agency) and the Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), presenting information about employment opportunities in state government and the Successful Disability Opportunities Program.

Reentry Employment Service Program

To better serve the employment needs of returning citizens and in response to the sharply increasing number of returning citizen job seekers in Illinois, Employment Security facilitates a statewide Reentry Employment Service Program (RESP). This program is for adults or juveniles who are or have been subject to any stage of the criminal justice process and who require assistance in overcoming barriers to employment resulting from a record of arrest or conviction. The RESP provides one-on-one job readiness assessments through its state labor exchange program, conducts workshops, makes appropriate referrals for supportive services, matches qualified job seekers with employer needs and encourages job retention.

Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers Program

The Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers Program is a statewide program that assists migrant farmworkers, food processors and seasonal workers with workforce development services, career guidance, referral to training, advocates for appropriate working conditions and referrals to supportive services.
**Hire the Future Program**

The Hire the Future (HTF) program encourages youth age 16-24 years old to aspire to careers in professional and growth-oriented occupations. It provides employment services to youth and introduces them to career opportunities.

**Economic Information and Analysis Division**

Employment Security's Economic Information and Analysis Division (EI&A) also offers consultation services and products on workforce outcomes to state agencies, training providers and universities. EI&A economists are singularly trained on workforce outcome metrics based on longstanding cooperative working relationships with the U.S. Census Longitudinal Employment Dynamics Division, USBLS, and DOL’s Employment and Training Administration.

**Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services**

The Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is the designated state agency for administration of the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program in Illinois. The main focus of the Department is to assist individuals with significant disabilities to obtain and retain competitive integrated employment. VR services are designed to prepare an individual for employment through an individualized planning process. Key VR services include:

- **Job Placement** - DRS VR counselors work with customers to identify job opportunities in the community, develop a resume and prepare for interviews. Other customers receive more intensive job placement and preparation services through community rehabilitation program agencies under contract to DRS.
- **On-the-Job Training and Evaluations** - Many VR customers receive on-the-job training and evaluation services arranged by DRS counselors in conjunction with local employers. These services provide an opportunity to demonstrate job skills and learn the requirements of a specific job.
- **College and University Training** - DRS assists many customers in pursuing a degree at a community college or at a university, based on the needs and abilities of the individual. Each year DRS assists about 3,000 individuals in attending college training.
- **Treatment and Restoration Services** - VR funds may be used to purchase medical, surgical, or psychological services, as well as other therapeutic services, to help customers achieve greater functioning and reduce barriers to employment.
- **Supported Employment** - Individuals with most significant disabilities often require a high level of support, both in preparation and on-the-job assistance, in order to achieve and maintain employment. Supported employment provides a variety of supports, such as job coaching, to assist customers in meeting employment goals.
- **Assistive Technology** - Many people with disabilities utilize a variety of technological devices to function in the world of work and increase their employment potential. The DRS VR program can assist customers with evaluation services and purchase of technology equipment that will meet their individual needs.
- **Transition Services** - Students with disabilities benefit from work-based learning experiences and other pre-employment services designed to prepare them for post-school employment or additional training.
DRS counselors establish program eligibility based on an evaluation of functional limitations, then work with the customer to develop an individualized plan for employment. Many services are provided through a network of community partners with the capacity to assist the customer in obtaining employment consistent with their needs. These include:

- Around 145 school districts which provide pre-employment transition services, including work-based learning experiences, to over 10,000 students with disabilities;
- About 150 community rehabilitation providers who provide job development, job placement and supported employment services to around 4,000 individuals; and
- Community colleges and universities that provide training services to about 3,000 individuals pursuing degrees or credentials to enhance employment skills.

DRS works in partnership with other elements of the workforce system to provide people with disabilities access to a wide range of services and employment opportunities. DRS staff are members of local workforce boards and serve as a key linkage to information on disability awareness, work accommodations and accessibility requirements.

**Employment First Initiative**

An important resource for meeting the employment needs of Illinoisans with disabilities is the Employment First initiative. Illinois became an Employment First state in July 2013 with the passage of the Employment First Act (Public Act 98-91). Employment First is a national movement to promote competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities, particularly individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. WIOA defines “competitive integrated employment” as the key objective for people with disabilities, creating inherent synergy between the two laws.

Before the passage of WIOA, Illinois’ Employment First Act created the Illinois Task Force on the Employment and Economic Development for Persons with Disabilities (EEOPD) to work towards the goal of increasing competitive integrated employment for citizens with disabilities. Members of the task force are appointed by the Governor and include people with disabilities, business representatives and officials from state agencies.

The guiding principles of the WIOA Unified State Plan align directly with Employment First. The focus on integrated service delivery, robust engagement with business, competitiveness and accessibility, cross-agency collaboration, and alignment of results-driven practices are shared by both the Unified State Plan and the Employment First movement and are in line with the preliminary findings and goals of the EEOPD. In addition, EEOPD is linked to the IWIB to ensure coordination and alignment of policy and practice rather than the IWIB creating a duplicative structure.

**B. STATE BOARD**

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

**STATE WORKFORCE BOARD FUNCTIONS**

Overseeing the entire workforce system on behalf of the Governor and General Assembly is the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB). The IWIB provides oversight and strategic leadership to the workforce development system to further the state’s goals of meeting the workforce needs of businesses and workers.
Appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Illinois Senate, the IWIB is charged with the task of reviewing the progress of the state’s workforce development efforts. To meet this directive the IWIB, in accordance with federal legislation, includes leaders from business, state agencies, industry, labor, education and community-based organizations. The Governor also appoints the two co-chairs for the IWIB. Currently, John Rico, President and CEO of Rico Enterprises, serves as the private sector co-chair, and James M. Schultz, Director of Commerce, serves as the co-chair representing the Governor. Attachment H includes a membership roster for the State Board, including members’ organizational affiliations.

Members of the IWIB represent organizations, agencies or other entities and require optimum policymaking authority within their organization, agency or entity. They must also represent diverse regions of the state, including urban, rural and suburban areas. Over 50% of the IWIB must be made up of business representatives. Other membership categories include: Governor and General Assembly appointments; state agencies; chief elected officials from cities and counties; labor organizations; youth activities representatives; workforce training representatives and education, including adult education; vocational rehabilitation; employment security; and other institutional representatives. The state has made it a priority to recruit business leaders from high-demand sectors whose companies are also end users of the workforce system.

The IWIB meets four times per calendar year, typically in the Chicago area twice a year, Springfield once per year and the central/southern region once per year. Special meetings may be convened as deemed appropriate by the co-chairs to address special issues. Another mechanism established by the IWIB was the creation of the Executive Committee to deliberate and make recommendations regarding key policy initiatives between regularly scheduled board meetings.

1. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

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

Membership Roster

Appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Illinois Senate, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), in accordance with federal legislation, includes leaders from business that represent high-demand sectors, state agencies, industry, labor, education and community-based organizations.

The Governor has made it a priority to recruit business leaders whose companies are also end users of the workforce system. Requiring business leaders that are end users provides the IWIB with better insight for setting policy that ensures workforce development activities are aligned and integrated with education and economic development in a way that serves the needs of employers, incumbent workers, and job seekers. Additionally, recognizing the importance that education from preschool through post-secondary plays in workforce development the Governor has ensured representatives from the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education have a central role on the state board.

Illinois law requires three additional appointments, the sitting president of the Illinois Workforce Partnership, which is an association of local board directors and Title I operators, and two additional members of the state legislature, representing each chamber and party affiliation.
A business representative and the Director that oversees the Title I program are appointed by the Governor to serve as co-chairs. These co-chairs are responsible for presiding over all IWIB meetings, convening them quarterly or more often as necessary, establishing committees and their structures, as well as serving as custodians of IWIB records. All meetings of the IWIB, including committees, abide by the Open Meetings Act.

### Table 12: Illinois Workforce Innovation Board Membership Roster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Entity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aranda-Suh</td>
<td>Elba</td>
<td>National Latino Education Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashby</td>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Mayor of Centralia Coordinated Transportation Dev, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beards</td>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>United Parcel Service</td>
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<td>Melinda</td>
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<td>Mike</td>
<td>Trenton Sun</td>
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<td>Julie</td>
<td>Illinois Workforce Partnership</td>
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<td>Christopher “C.D.”</td>
<td>Illinois Road Contractors, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Debra</td>
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<td>Victor</td>
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<td>Elizabeth</td>
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<td>Donahue</td>
<td>John</td>
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<td>Kirk</td>
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<td>C&amp;L Supreme</td>
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<td>Angela</td>
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<td>Massie</td>
<td>Michael</td>
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<td>Lake County Vocational System</td>
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<td>Payne</td>
<td>Terri</td>
<td>AFL-CIO</td>
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<td>Perry</td>
<td>Michael</td>
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<td>John</td>
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<td>Salgado</td>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>Institute for Latino Progress</td>
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<td>Schiemann</td>
<td>Margi</td>
<td>Nicor Gas</td>
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<td>John</td>
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<td>Smiddy</td>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>Illinois House of Representatives, 71st District</td>
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<td>Smith</td>
<td>Kris</td>
<td>Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tennant</td>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>Tennant Truck Lines, Inc.</td>
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<td>Walsh</td>
<td>Larry</td>
<td>Will County Executive</td>
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<td>Andrew</td>
<td>United Conveyer</td>
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<td>Chuck</td>
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<td>Sylvia</td>
<td>Bison Gear &amp; Engineering</td>
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<td>Terry</td>
<td>Rend Lake College</td>
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<td>Dr. James*</td>
<td>Illinois Board of Higher Education</td>
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<td>James*</td>
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<td>Karen*</td>
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<td>Schultz</td>
<td>Jim*</td>
<td>Illinois Business and Economic Development Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Tony*</td>
<td>Illinois State Board of Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Denotes ex-officio member

### 2. BOARD ACTIVITIES

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

**Board Staff and Committees**

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) has state staff from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) designated to coordinate the functions of the board, act as a liaison, and provide overall operational support. In addition, there are two coordinating bodies (Executive Committee and Interagency Work Group) designated by the IWIB that are responsible for the day-to-day board functions.

**Executive Committee** - As further commitment to ensuring adequate business representation and alignment of workforce, economic development and education occurs throughout the system, the IWIB created an Executive Committee that must be majority business members and include representation from the education system.

The Executive Committee has the authority to take action on the functional requirements on behalf of the IWIB when time does not allow for an issue to be addressed at a regularly scheduled board meeting. A majority vote of the Executive Committee is required for all such actions, which must be reviewed by the full board at the next regularly scheduled meeting. In addition to the review and issuance of policy and processes related to the mandated board functions, the Executive Committee also is responsible to the full board on:

- leading the board strategic planning efforts
- making legislative recommendations on related state workforce law as appropriate
- periodically reviewing the by-laws and making recommendations for amendments as appropriate
- outreach and recruitment of businesses
- education and outreach to congressional members as well as state legislators
- ensuring state education initiatives are aligned and connected to the state workforce system

Any interim or new policies for WIOA that are developed and presented to the Executive Committee go through a collaborative policy advisory process that will involve its members, WIOA partners, and stakeholders. The intention is to make WIOA policy development in Illinois more collaborative and ensure that it yields cost-effective and efficient guidance to the field.
Interagency Work Group - As a way to provide consistent direction to regional and local-level partners as they establish effective one-stop delivery systems, a state Interagency Work Group, consisting of all required state program partners under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), was convened to address state-level technical and programmatic issues associated with WIOA. The Interagency Work Group meets monthly to discuss operational and policy recommendations that emerge at the regional and local level, as well develop the necessary statewide policy needed for WIOA implementation. These recommendations are submitted to the Executive Committee for discussion and approval. Any cross-agency policy developed must go through the IWIB collaborative policy process.

To support the IWIB and staff in performing the function of developing policies relating to the appropriate roles and contributions of entities carrying out one-stop partner programs within the one-stop delivery system, the IWIB Executive Committee and Interagency Work Group have developed a communication protocol for identifying the need for cross-agency policies or guidance and a mechanism for developing and issuing those policies or guidance to all entities providing federally-funded programs and services under WIOA.

The protocol supporting the Board and staff in performing this function begins with the Interagency Work Group, with state-level representatives of all required programs under WIOA, identifying the need for cross-agency policy or formal communications by the IWIB Executive Committee. These policies or communications could include new or clarified guidance that significantly affects multiple required partners (e.g., new guidance that flows from established authoritative documents such as the “Governor’s Guidelines for Negotiating Cost and Services Under WIOA”), or they could include decisions about processes being put into place that significantly apply to required programs.

Once the need for a cross-agency policy or guidance is identified, then the Interagency Work Group reviews all proposed policies or formal communications and determines whether the formal issuance by the IWIB Executive Committee is appropriate or whether any changes are needed. The Interagency Work Group approves the final policy or formal communications and requests an action item on the agenda of the next IWIB Executive Committee meeting.

The IWIB Executive Committee then acts on whether to approve and issue the final policy or guidance and, if approved, issues the final policy or guidance on IWIB letterhead to the specific workforce delivery system stakeholders to which the policy or guidance pertains.

Youth Committee - The IWIB established a standing Youth Committee to create recommendations and oversee the implementation of creating sustainable pathways for youth throughout the state. There is a required business majority for membership on this committee and the chair must be a member of the IWIB that represents business.

Apprenticeship Committee - The IWIB has made designing a comprehensive system of apprenticeship (traditional and non-traditional) a major strategy for providing career pathways for economic advancement. To support this implementation, a standing Apprenticeship Committee was created which includes leaders representing all key state apprenticeship stakeholders: business and industry, training providers, Local Workforce Innovation Boards, labor, philanthropies, community colleges, vocational rehabilitation services and employment exchange services.

The Apprenticeship Committee’s focus will be to create a plan for the IWIB’s consideration that will establish a comprehensive and integrated apprenticeship system in Illinois, oversee its implementation and performance, and recommend improvements.
Initial strategies the Apprenticeship Committee will consider include, but are not limited to:

- aligning apprenticeship supply and demand
- organizing and engaging employers and industry partners
- fostering apprenticeship program innovation and expansion
- expanding access to under-represented populations, including women, minorities, and people with disabilities
- promotion and branding

Task Force Structure - The IWIB uses this structure to convene businesses and other interested partners to discuss topic-specific issues based on the established priorities of the IWIB. These groups are responsible for developing recommendations to present to the full IWIB for consideration. Examples of task forces include those focused on disadvantaged youth, healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, people with disabilities and transportation, distribution and logistics.

Board Activities

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board is supported by staff and a committee structure to perform key functions outlined WIOA Sec. 101(d)(1-12) including:

Unified State Plan and Annual Report Development

The IWIB is supported by the Executive Committee, Interagency Work Group and board staff with the development and review of the technical requirements of the Unified State Plan. The vision, goal and strategic elements are developed in partnership with the IWIB, Governor and Interagency Work Group. The annual report is developed using the same approach and activities. The IWIB will be supported by the agencies responsible for administering the core and required program to implement the Unified State Plan.

Continuous improvement, accountability and performance systems

The development of continuous improvement systems will be supported by the Evaluation Committee and Accountability Committee and Interagency Work Group including specialized assistance from the Interagency Data Team that includes experts in labor market information and performance data. The IWIB will also continue to work with the Interagency Work Group to identify and disseminate best practice information. A key continuous improvement activity is the Wednesday Webinars that are open to all IWIB members, core partners, required partners and local areas that covers best practice and coordination opportunities.
One-Stop Delivery System Policies

The development and review of statewide policies affecting the coordinated provision of services through the state’s one-stop delivery system will be supported by the work of the Youth Committee, Apprenticeship Committee, Executive Committee and the Interagency Work Group. The cross-agency policy development process outlined above is an example of how policies will be researched, developed, drafted and reviewed by the IWIB.

Strategies for Aligning Technology and Data Systems

The IWIB will be supported by the Evaluation and Accountability Committee that will create a framework of the data elements and requirements that will be key inputs for the alignment of technology and data systems across required partner programs in Illinois. This is a critical activity this is required for the IWIB to effectively evaluate and identify continuous improvement opportunities in the effectiveness and efficiency of Illinois’ workforce development system.
4. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS

A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE PROGRAMS

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

ASSESSMENT OF CORE PROGRAMS

The Governor, General Assembly, Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) and state agency partners continuously assesses the performance outcomes of the workforce system in the annual benchmark report and other performance reports. The state agency responsible for each of the core programs outlined in program specific areas constantly assesses performance accountability measures at the state, regional and local levels as required by each core program.

The state will develop strategies for aligning technology and data systems across core programs and to evaluate common performance outcomes, including the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs by local areas. One potential tool to support that assessment is a dashboard for aggregate data for all core programs. A subgroup of the Interagency Work Group is exploring such a dashboard that, if successful, will provide a high-level view of each core program’s performance by quarter and help identify the need for technical assistance or adjustments. In the meantime, and pending federal guidance about measurable skills gains and other performance-related requirements, the interagency subgroup is also working to identify common definitions, standards and procedures to prepare core program partners to meet performance accountability requirements of WIOA. The intent is to ensure the data collected by each core program partner fully conforms to WIOA and accurately reflects the outcomes for each core program on a local level and in aggregate.

The IWIB, in cooperation with the Interagency Work Group, has begun to establish objective criteria and procedures for use by local boards in assessing and certifying Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, per Section 121(g)(1) of WIOA. The state standard certification criteria will help ensure a minimum level of quality and consistency of services in Comprehensive One-Stop Centers throughout Illinois, regardless of location. As local boards review and update the criteria and processes for certifying Comprehensive One-Stop Centers biannually, insights will be gained on assessing and establishing standards on effectiveness, physical accessibility, programmatic accessibility and continuous improvement. These review processes will help identify best practices in assessing and improving local one-stop partner programs, both core and required programs, to promote efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce development system. Outcomes of the assessments of core program partners and of other required partners will be reported annually and made public.

The State will uses the performance data, expanded benchmark report, monitoring and certification process to assess the quality effectiveness and improvement of programs in each local area.
B. ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS

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

ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS

The Governor, General Assembly, Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) and state agency partners continuously assesses the performance outcomes of the workforce system in the annual benchmark report and other performance reports. The state agency responsible for each of the core programs outlined in program specific areas constantly assesses performance accountability measures at the state, regional and local levels as required by each core program.

The state will develop strategies for aligning technology and data systems across core programs and to evaluate common performance outcomes, including the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs by local areas. One potential tool to support that assessment is a dashboard for aggregate data for all core programs. A subgroup of the Interagency Work Group is exploring such a dashboard that, if successful, will provide a high-level view of each core program’s performance by quarter and help identify the need for technical assistance or adjustments. In the meantime, and pending federal guidance about measurable skills gains and other performance-related requirements, the interagency subgroup is also working to identify common definitions, standards and procedures to prepare core program partners to meet performance accountability requirements of WIOA. The intent is to ensure the data collected by each core program partner fully conforms to WIOA and accurately reflects the outcomes for each core program on a local level and in aggregate.

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Outcomes of the assessments of core program partners and of other required partners will be reported annually and made public.

The State will uses the performance data, expanded benchmark report, monitoring and certification process to assess the quality effectiveness and improvement of programs in each local area.

C. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.
Not applicable for 2016 submission

**D. EVALUATION**

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

**ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) has identified benchmarking as a leading strategy to assess and evaluate results. The annual benchmarking report is submitted to the IWIB, Governor and General Assembly as a method for measuring progress of the state’s workforce development system. The ten established benchmarks are designed to provide a comprehensive and balanced picture of the status and progress of workforce development services in Illinois. They are divided into three general categories:

Workforce Quality Benchmarks The first six benchmarks measure workforce quality and are arranged in an order that tracks the life of a worker through various educational milestones. These benchmarks include three youth benchmarks.

- Educational level of working-age adults
- Percentage of the adult workforce in education or workforce training
- Adult literacy
- Percentage of high school graduates transitioning to education or workforce training
- High school dropout rate
- The number of youth transitioning from 8th grade to 9th grade

*Earnings Benchmarks*

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

- Percentage of individuals and families at economic self-sufficiency
- Average growth in pay

Competitive Business Advantage Benchmarks The final two benchmarks are key indicators of Illinois’ competitive business advantage.

- Net job growth
- Productivity per employee

Illinois will consider refining the State Benchmark Report and identify additional metrics (such as the Alliance for Quality Career Pathway(AQCP) that will assess both our progress towards meeting WIOA goals and the effectiveness of the strategies to move towards those goals. The expanded benchmark report will clearly link overall organizational principles to program goals, strategies and outcomes. This provides the framework for an ongoing feedback mechanism, through which program goals and strategies can be consistently evaluated with regard to their contributions.
towards program outcomes and may be adjusted if those outcomes indicate a need. By maintaining this “clear line of sight” between goals, strategies and outcomes, the assessment process becomes much more comprehensible and transparent for all of the WIOA partners, as well as for the IWIB in its oversight role.

The overarching intent is to accomplish a fundamental shift toward measuring the system’s ability to make our workers and businesses as globally competitive as possible. While each program will maintain its mandated measures, we will work with the private sector to identify what success means in serving employers. Potential measures could include the areas of program flexibility and responsiveness; reducing the amount of time required for new hires to reach full productivity; reducing the amount of time required for new program participants to begin earning money; reducing the amount of time needed to fill vacant positions; and working toward wholesale improvement of essential workplace skills. The Interagency Work Group will work with partners to integrate evaluation and research projects that impact the workforce system in Illinois. The state will also consider the information developed by the interagency data team and other program-specific evaluations, research reports and pilot programs such as the Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing Program, Workforce Data Quality Initiative and Disability Employment Initiative in the development of an integrated evaluation and research approach.
5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

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

A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

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

1. YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 128(B)(2) OR (B)(3),

Youth Activities

Illinois will distribute Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth funds according to Section 128(b)(2)(A). Illinois does not intend to distribute WIOA Youth Program funds to local areas based on the youth discretionary allocation formula contained in Section 128(b)(3)(B). Utilizing the additional factors contained in Section 128(b)(3)(B) would, in our estimation, undermine decisions by the Governor and the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board regarding the local area boundaries within which WIOA should operate locally. In many instances local areas would likely be left without the amount of funding necessary to allow them to operate viable youth programs.

2. ADULT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) OR (B)(3),

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS-TITLE I (ADULT)

Illinois will distribute WIOA Adult funds according to Section 133(b)(2)(A). Illinois also does not intend to distribute funds to local areas for adults based on the adult discretionary allocation formula contained in Section 133(b)(3)(B). As with the discretionary youth allocation described above, utilizing the additional factors contained in Section 133(b)(3)(B) would likely undermine the decisions by the Governor and the Illinois Workforce Board regarding the local workforce area boundaries. In many instances local areas would likely be left without the amount of funding necessary to allow them to operate viable adult programs. Attachment Q: https://www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan

3. DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) AND BASED ON DATA AND WEIGHTS ASSIGNED.

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS-TITLE 1 (DISLOCATED WORKERS)

Illinois intends to allocate WIOA dislocated worker funds on the basis of the formula described below, pursuant to section 133(b)(2)(B). Each of the following factors will be used to distribute 25% of the funds to be allocated:

- Insured unemployment data: Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) unemployment insurance (UI) claimant data for the most recently completed calendar year will be used. Each local workforce area’s share of the state total of such claimants is determined, and the area is allocated that share of the funds apportioned by this factor.
• Unemployment concentrations: Unemployment figures for the most recently completed program year will be used. Only counties with unemployment rates above the statewide average will be included in the formula. Each workforce area’s share of the state total of such unemployment is determined, and the area is allocated that share of the funds apportioned by this factor.

• Declining industries data: For each workforce area, employment by three-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code is determined for the first calendar quarter (January-March) of the two most recent years for which data is available from IDES’ ES-202 UI-covered employment report. The number of jobs lost within industries showing an employment loss from one year to the next is totaled for each area. Each workforce area’s share of the state total of such employment loss is determined, and the area is allocated that share of the funds apportioned by this factor.

• Long-term unemployment data: IDES data for the number of UI claimants who were unemployed for 15 or more weeks during the most recently completed calendar year will be used. Each workforce area’s share of the state total of such long-term claimants is determined, and the area is allocated that share of the funds apportioned by this factor.

• The plant closing and mass layoff data and farmer-rancher economic hardship factors will be given zero weighting under the WIOA dislocated worker allocation formula, due to a lack of public use data sources with sufficient geographic detail to adequately serve the requirements of an allocation formula.Attachment Q:
https://www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan

B. FOR TITLE II:

1. MULTI-YEAR GRANTS OR CONTRACTS

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

Multi-Year Grants or Contracts

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is the state’s eligible agency for adult education and literacy programs. ICCB is responsible for administering funds and providing program/performance oversight to grantees.

Adult education and literacy eligible providers approved under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) requirements will continue to receive funding through June 30, 2017, as long as they adhere to state and federal grant expectations, as measured through annual application, financial reports, and program performance reports. The ICCB will award three-year grants or contracts to all eligible applicants who meet the required criteria. The grant contract will reflect a number of variables, including availability of funding, demonstrated effectiveness from year to year, and other factors. The length of the multi-year grant or contract will be three years to correspond with the effective period of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Illinois will use a three-year grant or contract process that will be subject to renewal or continuation annually. Applicants may apply as a single entity or as part of a consortium. The application process used to award funding for eligible adult education applicants will be the same for every applicant. All eligible applicants of demonstrated effectiveness must provide evidence of their ability to meet or exceed prescribed performance outcomes and provide evidence of their capacity to provide
instructional and support services to the targeted populations identified. Continuation of a grant or contract from year to year is contingent on sufficient funding and submittal and approval of an official application that includes demonstration of adequate and effective performance in the prior year.

The competitive process for grants in Illinois is subject to the Illinois Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA), which is based on EDGAR, the Education Department General Administrative Regulations and FFATA, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act. During the competitive grant cycle, all eligible providers will be notified of the funding opportunity through a uniform public notification and application process and will be asked to submit a competitive application and complete a thorough pre-qualification process. All providers who meet all of the eligibility requirements will be able to access and participate in the application process of a competitive grant cycle.

During 2016-17, the ICCB will implement a new competitive application process for all federal and state Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funding that will determine the eligible providers that will be awarded funds starting July 1, 2017. The review of proposals will include rating responses of the 13 considerations as in Title II of WIOA as well as the state consideration of making certain the applicants proposed budget is consistent with the eligible provider’s activities, is cost efficient within administrative guidelines and places emphasis on serving the target populations. The considerations that will be used in the competitive process are listed below.

**Considerations**

1. The documented need of the eligible applicant to serve individuals in the community who are most in need of literacy services and those who are in need of career pathway services, including individuals who have literacy skills (i.e., literacy statistics, regional and local needs, etc.).
2. The program is of sufficient intensity and duration for individuals, including those with learning disabilities, to achieve substantial learning gains.
3. The past effectiveness of an eligible applicant in improving the literacy skills of adults, including those with low literacy levels; and demonstrates the ability to meet or exceed the levels of performance.
4. The demonstrated alignment to the requirements of the adult education services and activities as well as alignment to the local plans.
5. The program uses instructional practices and activities that research has proven to be effective in teaching to achieve learning gains, is of sufficient intensity and duration, is built on a strong foundation of research and effective educational practice and includes the essential components of reading.
6. The program demonstrates the effectiveness in providing instruction in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition and is based on best practices, research and state standards.
7. The program activities effectively employ advances in technology including the use of computers as a part of instruction as well as distance education, when applicable.
8. The program activities provide contextualized learning including integrated education and training as well as bridge programs to ensure that an individual has the skills needed to compete in the workplace, transition to post-secondary education and training, advance in employment, and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
9. The program is staffed by well-trained instructors, counselors, support staff and administrators who meet state guidelines, and have participated in high quality professional development.
10. The program activities are coordinated with other available resources in the community, such as establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, post-secondary institutions, Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, job training programs, business, and social service agencies.

11. The program offers flexible schedules and supportive services (such as child care and transportation) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs.

12. The program maintains a high-quality information management system, as determined by the ICCB and has the capacity to report participant outcomes and to monitor program performance measures.

13. The local communities have a demonstrated need for additional English Literacy programs and civic education programs.

14. The proposed budget is consistent with the eligible provider’s activities, is cost efficient within administrative guidelines and places emphasis on serving the target populations.
Timeline

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January -</td>
<td>ICCB publishes three-year federal AEFLA Request for Proposals (RFP) aligned with the priorities in the approved Unified State Plan and in compliance with state GATA and federal EDGAR and FFATA rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>• An open bidder’s conference will be held to provide an overview of the competitive RFP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March - May</td>
<td>• ICCB provides technical assistance to inquiries from potential eligible providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April - May</td>
<td>ICCB recruits candidates to review and score AEFLA grant applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>FAQ’s are posted to the ICCB website to distribute broadly the questions asked during the bidders conference as well as during the entire process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March - April</td>
<td>Due date for AEFLA grant applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Reviewers review and score AEFLA grant applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>ICCB conducts review of budgets and other grant requirements and develops a rank-ordered slate based on applicant scores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May - June</td>
<td>ICCB announces AEFLA grant applicants that will receive funding, contingent upon the release of state and federal funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>AEFLA grant providers begin grant cycle, programming, and funding.</td>
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</table>

The ICCB will provide funding to eligible local entities for the provision of adult education services through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Through this process, the ICCB will identify, assess and award three-year grants to eligible providers throughout the state. An eligible applicant is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include: a local education agency; a community-based or faith-based organization; a volunteer literacy organization; an institution of higher education; a public or private nonprofit agency; a library; a public housing authority; a nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services; a consortium or coalition or agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and a partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

To determine if an applicant is an organization of demonstrated effectiveness, all applicants will be required to provide data demonstrating their ability to improve skills of low-literate adults in the applicable instructional areas as described in the RFP. Applicants may use existing data to demonstrate the ability to achieve state and federal performance measures for all student levels including English language learners or provide data and information to demonstrate the ability to assist learners in achieving learning gain, including low-literacy level and English language learners. An applicant will be required to demonstrate its record of improving the knowledge and skills needed to transition successfully to post-secondary education, skills training, or employment. Each application will be reviewed to determine whether it meets the standard of demonstrated effectiveness. Applications that do not provide sufficient evidence of demonstrated effectiveness will not be considered for funding.

In continuation years of a multi-year grant cycle, demonstrated effectiveness will be evaluated based on past performance in achieving state negotiated performance measures as well as achieving the prescribed requirements of the grant, including the attainment of educational functional level increases/measurable skills gains, and successful programs that transition students to post-secondary education, training and employment.
Funding Distribution

Title II Adult Education and Literacy funding will be used to provide prescribed instructional and supportive services in all of the designated Area Planning Councils (APCs) in Illinois. The APCs, designated by Illinois state statute as the geographic units for adult education funding distribution, are aligned with each of the 39 community college districts which are represented in each workforce region as well as Local Workforce Innovation Area. Funds that are awarded through competitive grant cycles will be distributed through the use of a comprehensive funding methodology that is based on the APC’s index of need, as calculated on an annual basis using the most recent U.S. Census data/American Community Survey results. The variable used includes literacy needs of both the English Speaking Population and the English language population as well as poverty and unemployment needs in an area.

Within an APC, the funds are then distributed proportionately among approved eligible providers based on demonstrated performance, previous data, units of instruction, and enrollments. During continuation years in a multi-year grant cycle, the funding formula will also take into account the most recent completed and verified data of measurable skill gains as a continuous indicator of demonstrated effectiveness. Providers who are new to the process will be awarded funding based upon their proposed enrollments as indicated in their application as related to the funding request.

2. ENSURE DIRECT AND EQUITABLE ACCESS

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

All grants awarded through the State of Illinois are now subject to the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA), based on EDGAR, the Education Department General Administrative Regulations and FFATA, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act. Under GATA, all grant applications and awards are subject to uniform processes to ensure transparency, fairness and equitable access to all eligible participants and providers. Grant notifications are performed through the posting of a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to a public web portal, Grants.Illinois.gov, where all of the eligibility criteria, application and grant requirements, and an explanation of the application and approval process are posted. The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), state eligible agency, will also provide notification and access to the public portal through the use of the ICCB web site and with direct electronic mail notifications to all potential applicants, including both current providers and eligible potential providers. Eligible providers must then complete a thorough pre-qualification and application process in order to be considered for a grant. The ICCB will use the same application, process, and rubric/grading process for all applicants submitting an application.

The ICCB will use the same announcement and application and submission procedures for all eligible applicants under WIOA Sections 225, 231, and 243. Each application will be reviewed and evaluated using the same criteria as indicated in the grant or contract application. Each applicant must address the areas that are applicable.
Eligible applicants will be asked to address applicable activities listed below:

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training.

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) will publish and distribute broadly a Request for Proposals (RFP) in the Spring of FY 2017, which will be aligned with the Unified State Plan and other education and workforce plans. During a competitive year, to be considered for funding an applicant must:

1. Be an Eligible Applicant, as listed below:
   - Local educational agencies (LEAs)
   - Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) or Faith-Based Organization (FBO)
   - Volunteer Literacy Organizations
   - Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs)
   - Public or Private nonprofit agencies
   - Libraries
   - Public-housing authorities
   - Non-profit institutions that are described previously and have the ability to provide adult education and literacy services to eligible individuals
   - Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described previously
   - Partnership between an employer and an entity described above
2. Respond to the Request for Proposal by the due date
3. Complete all required portions of the application
4. Meet all deadlines and other elements as specified in the Request for Proposal
5. Meet all eligibility requirements

The past effectiveness of an eligible applicant in improving the literacy skills of adults is a strong factor in the delivery of adult education instruction and supportive services. In addition, the alignment of local adult education activities with the local area plans and services as well as local regional workforce plans are essential.

For grant/contract continuation years, notices will be emailed and communicated to current eligible entities only. Eligible providers may then apply for continuation of the grant. The continuation of an applicant is contingent upon the availability of federal and state funding; a sufficient appropriation of funding as well as the applicant’s demonstrated of effectiveness in serving the target population, achieving the state negotiated performance targets, and the ability to meet all grant requirements.

C. TITLE IV VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

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

This is not applicable to the State of Illinois.
A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

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

1. DESCRIBE THE STATE’S PLANS TO MAKE THE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS INTEROPERABLE TO MAXIMIZE THE EFFICIENT EXCHANGE OF COMMON DATA ELEMENTS TO SUPPORT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION.

The Illinois core partners already have long-standing data sharing agreements in place whereby the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce), Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) request data matching of the Unemployment Insurance Wage Record Data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security). The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) has motivated the agencies to look closely at the long-term agreements and determine if changes need to be made to accommodate the new and innovative sharing of data between the agencies.

The agreements facilitate cross-program access to data about common participants while minimizing duplicative systems costs. In addition to one-on-one data access the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) and the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) fully executed a multiple agency data sharing agreement with all the State of Illinois educational and workforce agencies. This data sharing agreement allows for the sharing of agency data via the new established Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator (CDDA). The interagency agreements and the CDDA arrangement establishes a master client index number for all clients and facilitates integrated and streamlined service delivery, common reporting and measurement of interagency longitudinal performance outcomes as required under WIOA Section 116(d)(2).

Illinois will continue to use existing web-based interfaces that integrate data via Application Program Interface (API) tools. Real-time access to workforce development resources for individuals, businesses and workforce professionals is available, shareable and viewable in user-friendly dashboards for better customer service. Ongoing discussions include how to further integrate the Internet-based data systems to enhance program alignment and service delivery.

- Currently the Illinois workNet portal connects individuals and businesses to workforce services and data. The new Beta version of the portal serves as a hub for WIOA implementation resources and guidance for all required programs. The open source and widget technology available in the new version allows for maximum agility in on-demand program development and implementation needs.
- Employment Security administers the IllinoisJobLink (IJL) system to collect data on job seeker and employer customers. IllinoisJobLink.com is an internet-based system with a
centralized job search engine and resume service that integrates workforce customer information to facilitate coordination of services across partner programs.

- The Illinois Community College Board—Adult Education administers the Illinois Data and Information System (DAIS-i), which is a web-based system that collects relevant student level record data on education, attendance, courses and employment data needed for reporting to WIOA.
- The Illinois Governor’s Office is actively assisting the core partners in technology interoperability solutions. Assessments of current systems have begun and additional research and analysis will be necessary prior to committing one solution for the state. Further discovery is needed and attention made to mold the technology plan with the state WIOA plan so that policy drives the state technology. This action will ensure long-term success and sustainability of a WIOA Unified State Plan and workforce system.

As evident from the strategies laid out in the Unified State Plan, the use of integrated data-driven information is a priority for the State of Illinois and is specifically addressed in Strategy 6 and the associated activities. Strategy 6 specifically addresses maximizing the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation by improving public-private data infrastructure.

Strategy 6: Improve Public-Private Data Infrastructure

The Interagency Data Team, in cooperation with the Interagency Work Group, will expand and improve the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the five strategies described above. This requires the integration of labor market information with state education and workforce longitudinal data systems, as well as program and case management systems.

Activity 6.1: Enhance the State Labor Market Information System

The core partners, including Employment Security, will work to enhance the labor market information system to support the six WIOA strategies.

Activity 6.2: Expand and Improve the State Longitudinal Data System

The Illinois data team will continue to expand and improve the state education and workforce longitudinal data system to support the six strategies. This will include initiatives to use state longitudinal data to support regional sector partnerships based on lessons learned from initiatives such as the Vermilion Advantage pilot project. It will also continue to build the capacity to link to state licensing, industry and professional certification data. This will build on the pilot projects conducted by ICCB by:

- Expanding labor market information by including improved measures of workforce outcomes (job attachment and full quarter earnings) that can be used to benchmark the outcomes for education and training graduates to other Illinois workers.
- Developing longitudinal worker profiles from improved measures for workforce outcomes.
- Developing and implementing a mapping of labor entrants and worker flows across jobs and over time to understand local labor supply and employer demand dynamics.

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

The Illinois data team will work with core partners and the Illinois Chief Information Officer to improve the integration of program and case management systems as applicable to improve service delivery.
This team also will work to improve the integration with state longitudinal data systems to support evaluation and continuous improvement.

2. DESCRIBE THE STATE’S PLANS TO INTEGRATE DATA SYSTEMS TO FACILITATE STREAMLINED INTAKE AND SERVICE DELIVERY TO TRACK PARTICIPATION ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN.

Illinois does not yet have an integrated data system but is committed to pursuing alignment and integration of participant and performance data across core programs with the ultimate goal of providing effective and efficient services that leads to the participants’ employment as quickly as possible.

To help prepare for and explore options for data integration, an interagency performance subgroup of the Interagency Work Group is focused on performance accountability and data integration. Core program partner representatives have identified existing gaps between the data currently collected and the data required to be collected under WIOA. Core partners established priorities and strategies for addressing those gaps, including identifying the following:

- Actions core partners can take now to adjust their own data systems in preparation for new performance accountability requirements under WIOA;
- Data collection methods and standards that are best practices in some core program partners and could be explored for use by other core program partners (e.g., how to account for participants who lack a Social Security number when reporting performance outcomes);
- Potential platforms for developing a common framework for use by all required partners under WIOA;
- Development of a dashboard for core program partners to track individual and aggregate performance data across core programs;
- Mechanisms for facilitating smart referrals and allowing core program partners to share information directly with each other’s systems; and
- Items which require additional Federal guidance, such as these examples: o Consistency of measurable skills gains in terms of the necessity of standardized tools and procedures between core programs for assessing participant skills and the time period over which skills gains are to be measured; and o Additional definition of “effectiveness serving employers” so core program partners can prepare to demonstrate such effectiveness.

As evident from the strategies laid out in the Unified State Plan, the development and use of an integrated data system to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs is a priority for the State of Illinois and is addressed specifically in strategy 4 of the Unified State Plan.

Strategy 4 specifically addresses integrating data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across programs, including the coordination of career services and case management.
Strategy 4: Coordinate and Enhance Career Services and Case Management

The Interagency Work Group will develop and implement policies for integrated and enhanced career services and case management.

Activity 4.1: Provide Coordinated and Enhanced Career Services

The Interagency Work Group is working to support the delivery of enhanced career services to participants across partner programs. Employment Security is responsible for the Illinois Career Information System, a web-based tool that incorporates Illinois-specific actionable data on in-demand occupations and wages that allow students and job seekers to make informed decisions about their career pathways. These services will result in individualized plans addressing how to reach career goals based on career and skill assessments and identified barriers requiring support services. Agency partners also will include the assessment of digital literacy as a basic skill and provide services to participants in gaining these skills through career services and through additional services in career pathway bridge programs. Agency partners will also provide career services guides, tools and professional development to core program staff in providing these career services. This will be supported by the interagency labor market information team to provide improved access to career guidance information in in-demand industries and occupations and education, training and credentialing options for achieving career and education goals in participant plans (See Activity 5.2).

Activity 4.2: Provide Coordinated and Enhanced Case Management Services

The Interagency Work Group will establish a case management team, as applicable, to coordinate and support the delivery of enhanced case management services to participants across the core programs and with other partners. This case management team will provide training in the use of case management data from aligned and integrated case management systems used by core programs and with other partners, including related human resources and Supportive Service programs (See Activity 6.3).

Activity 4.3: Promote Continuous Improvement and Ongoing Professional Development

State agency partners will promote continuous improvement in career services and case management services through state and regional initiatives to promote leading business practices. They will promote the ongoing professional development of front-line staff providing client services through case management academies and national professional development and credentialing programs, such as the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP). Cross-agency training and professional development will be developed to ensure needs are clearly understood by all partners, both core and required. For example, the ICCB Adult Education will provide professional development to agency partners in the appropriate administration of educational assessment of basic skill deficiencies. Training and other professional development resources will be developed in collaboration with front-line and supervisory workforce personnel to ensure they are relevant and timely, and technological solutions will be pursued to maximize access and cost-effectiveness.

Activity 4.4: Promote the Incorporation of Required Partner Services

The core partners will explore opportunities to incorporate the services of the Comprehensive One-Stop Center partners into case management and career services. Illinois has made progress through the Interagency Work Group to identify the business services, career services, training services and
supportive services of the state’s workforce, education and economic development partners. Through the implementation of best practices from programs such as the Disability Employment Initiative, the state will develop policies to ensure that there is a customer-centered approach of coordinating services that consider the additional needs of the targeted populations as identified in Chapter 2.

3. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL ASSIST THE GOVERNOR IN ALIGNING TECHNOLOGY AND DATA SYSTEMS ACROSS REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS (INCLUDING DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON INTAKE, DATA COLLECTION, ETC.) AND HOW SUCH ALIGNMENT WILL IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY TO INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS.

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) has established an Evaluation and Accountability Committee that will create a framework of the data elements and requirements that will be key inputs for the alignment of technology and data systems across required one-stop partners program in Illinois. This is a critical activity this is required for the IWIB to effectively evaluate and identify continuous improvement opportunities in the effectiveness and efficiency of Illinois’ workforce development system. During the first year the committee will create a framework by which to work. For the accountability component, the committee will map the components of the Unified State Plan to the work being carried out by all of the IWIB committees. Early work on evaluation will address questions of service delivery and potential approaches to answering those questions. In subsequent years, the committee will begin looking at larger questions related to evaluation and performance. The committee will review the research agendas of various components of the system and identify opportunities to strengthen alignment and prioritization of research questions. The availability of the Illinois Longitudinal Data System and the Comprehensive Demographic Dataset will open new evaluation and research opportunities that could lead to improvements in the system.

Through the work of this IWIB Evaluation and Accountability Committee, the Interagency Work Group will build on the findings to: (1) develop a state and regional cross-agency benchmark report for stakeholders and the general public, and (2) provide additional regional planning data and tools to further support regional planning to align education, workforce and economic development. Furthermore, the Interagency Work Group will build on existing agency initiatives to develop and use strategic indicators and benchmarks as part of comprehensive data resources for state and regional planning.

The IWIB and Interagency Work Group will work to align the state’s evaluation and reporting strategies to ensure that they will be supported by the improved data systems. The state will align the work of the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) and Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator (CDDA) project with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) implementation. The ILDS will enable state agencies to link workforce, education and early childhood data to help understand how to best meet Illinois’ workforce and education needs. The focus of the ILDS is on developing a reporting system for areas that are important to Illinois parents, students, teachers, program administrators and policymakers. The CDDA addresses the challenge of linking records across state agencies that use different identifiers for the same individual. This initiative provides a technical record matching and identity resolution procedure and software to securely and confidentially match records across seven different agencies that include three of the four core partners:

- Illinois Department of Commerce
- Illinois Community College Board
Six agencies have completed data-sharing agreements and have begun to submit to the CDDA so that unique individual identifiers may be assigned across agencies. The data-sharing agreement for the seventh agency is near completion. To date, 69.7 million records have been processed and 14.2 million unique individuals identified. This opportunity to use longitudinal data to assess education and employment outcomes over time will be included in the scope of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board’s (IWIB) accountability and evaluation strategies.

**WIOA Technical Assessment**

Since the submittal of the Unified State Plan in March 2016, the Office of the Governor has established the Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) to “lead digital transformation within the state and increase interagency efficiency and improve delivery of services to residents and businesses.” DoIT has conducted two phases of an independent WIOA Technical Assessment of the core partners’ applications supporting the WIOA programs. The goal of the WIOA Technical Assessment is for the state Chief Information Officer (CIO), in consultation with the core partners, to provide a comprehensive solution to implement a technically integrated WIOA system in Illinois. The state CIO has secured resources from an experienced technical team to lead the assessment and the directors from the core partners requested additional information regarding usability of potential WIOA enterprise systems and to obtain input from the business leads. A business lead from each of the core partners was designated by each director to help identify an enterprise WIOA solution.

The scope of the WIOA technical assessment included a review of business, information, and system architecture and current applications supporting WIOA programs for the core partner businesses. This assessment is the first of many steps toward developing the capacity for common intake and improving service delivery for job seekers, especially the unemployed. The WIOA technical assessment team’s approach was to view the WIOA core partners collectively as an enterprise or program that is responsible for providing job seekers with a technology offering Single Sign-On (SSO) access, Integrated Workforce Registration (IWR), real-time triage and coordinated service provisioning for the portfolio of WIOA programs. The WIOA technical assessment team approached the assessment of each of the core partner’s system(s), from a customer-centric, job seeker user experience. The WIOA technical assessment team’s approach aligned with the United States Department of Labor (DOL) Employment Training Administration’s (ETA) national vision for states to provide “a system that is driven by a single Workforce System Registration (WSR) as the entry point to the nation’s "reemployment system" - and offers a coordinated customer-centric focus with full partner access.”

The WIOA technical assessment discovered that the current WIOA business service delivery model includes challenges such as multiple access points, multiple online forms, siloed information and lack of service coordination. Phase I and II of the technical assessment concluded that efforts should be focused on implementing a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) product from a market leading vendor. Phase III includes evaluating and obtaining a COTS solution and utilizing a Systems Integrator as part of the implementation process. This includes:
• Development of a state Request for Proposal (RFP) that encompasses all of the findings from the technical assessment.
• Fast track procurement to receive competitive bids for a WIOA enterprise solution to meet the State of Illinois’ needs.
• Assign the Chief Statewide Applications Officer to lead the procurement effort.
• Obtain a Systems Integrator to implement the chosen solution.
• Identify a Change Manager to lead cultural change, training activities and create the structure for a Steering committee.
• Identify a Project Manager not associated with the four core partner agencies.

Immediately following the RFP the implementation of the solution will begin. The entire process will integrate all of the core partners, ensuring that the goals of WIOA are met.

4. DESCRIBE THE STATE’S PLANS TO DEVELOP AND PRODUCE THE REPORTS REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 116, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM. (WIOA SECTION 116(D)(2)).

Use of the Workforce Development System to Assess Progress of Participants that are Exiting from Core Programs and Entering, Persisting in and Completing Postsecondary Education or Employment One significant challenge is that no mechanism currently exists to allow all core program partners to track participant exits across all programs. An interagency subgroup working with Illinois’ Chief Information Officer is exploring the development of a common information system using the existing Illinois Framework for Healthcare and Human Services. Ongoing discussions include the possibility of adapting that framework for WIOA purposes, including tracking participant exits from all programs. Two initiatives that will support this effort are the Longitudinal Data System and Workforce Data Quality Initiative.

• Partners established a common vision and built the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) with data sharing agreements with universities and others to ensure consistently high levels of quality, reliability and security in matching and managing participant-level data across agency and university partners. The LDS Agencies and the Governing Board have made substantial progress on activities that relate to the LDS Functions in 2014-15. As detailed in this Section, this progress includes:
  o Development and adoption of the Initial Annual Report and Plan;
  o A number of intraagency enhancements that support the broader LDS effort;
  o The selection and establishment of the Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator;
  o Significant work and accomplishments in the end-user service priorities established by the Governing Board.
• Illinois currently participates in the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI), to improve the linkages between education, workforce development and human services data systems that build from current education state longitudinal data system initiatives through a common identifier system and data quality and security framework and shared applications.

Planning Note: States should be aware that Section 116(i)(1) requires the core programs, local boards, and chief elected officials to establish and operate a fiscal and management accountability information system based on guidelines established by the Secretaries of Labor and Education. Separately, the Departments of Labor and Education anticipate working with States to inform future guidance and possible information collection(s) on these accountability systems. States should begin laying the groundwork for these fiscal and management accountability requirements, recognizing
that adjustments to meet the elements above may provide opportunity or have impact on such a fiscal and management accountability system.

B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS’ POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

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

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C. USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA

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

The Illinois core partners already have long-standing data sharing agreements in place whereby the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce), Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Vocational Rehabilitation) and Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) request data matching of the Unemployment Insurance Wage Record Data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security). WIOA has motivated the agencies to look closely at the long-term agreements and determine if changes need to be made to accommodate the new and innovative sharing of data between the agencies. The agreements facilitate cross-program access to data about common participants while minimizing duplicative systems costs. In addition to one-on-one data access the Illinois Longitudinal Data System and the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) fully executed a multiple agency data sharing agreement with all the state of Illinois educational and workforce agencies. This data sharing agreement allows for the sharing of agency data via the new established Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator (CDDA). The interagency agreements and the CDDA arrangement establishes a master client index number for all clients and facilitates integrated and streamlined service delivery, common reporting and measurement of interagency longitudinal performance outcomes as required under WIOA Section 116(d)(2).

D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

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

PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

Privacy Safeguards Incorporated into the Workforce Development System, Including Complying with Section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act and other Federal Laws Continuing to comply with federal and state laws governing protection of personally identifiable information is a priority during WIOA implementation. Existing privacy safeguards in administering the core programs in Illinois pose opportunities for additional collaboration and interoperability, while efforts also exist to ensure security systems and procedures do not inhibit service integration.

For instance, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) maintains student data related to high school equivalency exams. Any entities outside of the community college board system submit forms to ICCB staff focused on data accountability to ensure compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 USC § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), which protects the privacy of student education records. Future considerations include how data integration between required programs can facilitate a smooth transition from high school to the workforce or to post-secondary education while preserving the privacy of their records throughout the workforce system.

The Department of Employment Security’s (Employment Security) existing system could also serve as a model for cross-agency collaboration. The Labor Exchange Program is a password-protected program backed by a user agreement, including an explanation of how individual data will be used throughout service delivery. Internal communications through the program use a unique participant identification number rather than a Social Security number. The unique identification number could be used across required programs to help preserve privacy and facilitate tracking of that participant by core program partners.
7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS

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

VETERAN’S PRIORITY IN THE ONE-STOP SYSTEM

Illinois places a priority in serving the 721,000 veterans located throughout the state. Veterans and covered persons will receive priority of service in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act codified at Section 4215 of 38 USC. The Comprehensive One-Stop Centers are committed to helping veterans find a job. Illinois veterans have been served over the years through targeted programs administered through the Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) and the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs in cooperation with other education and workforce agencies.

In Illinois, Employment Security serves as the lead agency for veteran’s employment and employer services. All veterans, regardless of their characterization of discharge, are provided employment services by Wagner-Peyser staff, using the Veterans triage process. Those eligible veterans identified with significant barriers to employment during the initial assessment (part of the veterans triage process) are referred by the Wagner-Peyser staff to the Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist for potential career services. The DVOP can also refer veterans to job training programs, provide coordination and referrals to core and required partner agencies, and facilitate the job development process with the Local Veterans’ Employment Representative (LVER). The core programs and required partners are working together to expand upon alignment of services and referral methods specifically for veterans. For example, the current practice for serving veterans who are ineligible for Veterans Administration Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment services may include a DVOP specialist providing a referral to Vocational Rehabilitation to assess and assist the veteran with mitigating his or her disability in order to meet their employment goal. DVOP’s also work closely with other core and required partners as well as community supportive service organizations to help veterans receive various supportive assistance, training and certification credentials. Some of the highlighted programs serving veterans in Illinois include:

- IllinoisJobLink.com - Illinois Labor Exchange is an online tool used by veterans searching for jobs in Illinois.
- Illinois Joining Forces Foundation - Statewide public and private organizational network that works to identify, collaborate and marshal available resources and services to create efficient access and delivery of these programs to the state’s military and veteran communities. One of the main objectives is to provide a network of organizations with improved capacity, awareness and intra-network referrals.
- Reemployment Services (RES) - RES is a joint effort with the Unemployment Insurance (UI) profiling program that provides certain profiled claimants with reemployment workshops. These workshops train claimants on interviewing techniques, provide job search instructions and explain the many employment services and resources available.
- Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP) - IVTP offers Illinois’ incarcerated veterans employment services during and after confinement.
Veteran representatives provide services in 13 Illinois correctional facilities. Employment Security coordinates with the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) and the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) to provide employment workshops for inmates within 18 months of their maximum release date. Emphasis is placed on job search techniques and resources to help these veterans address the unique employment barriers and other obstacles they face when attempting to re-enter the job market after their release. See table from full version of Unified State Plan regarding the employment status of Illinois’ veterans.

### Employment Status of Illinois’ Civilian Non-Institutional Population 18 Years and Over by Veteran Status, January 2015-December 2015 (based on CPS) (Numbers in thousands)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Civilian Labor Force</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civilian Non-</td>
<td>Percent of</td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Rate</td>
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<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Population in</td>
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<td>Labor Force</td>
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<td>Veterans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gulf War Era (I &amp; II) Veterans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gulf War I Veterans</td>
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<td>Gulf War II Veterans</td>
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<td>86.3%</td>
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<td>Non-Veterans</td>
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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey
8. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

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

PHYSICAL AND PROGRAMMATIC ACCESSIBILITY TO THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

Illinois is committed to ensuring both programmatic and physical accessibility to the One-Stop delivery system by maintaining compliance with WIOA Section 188, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and all other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. Compliance monitoring is conducted at the state and local level to make certain that all comprehensive one-stop facilities, programs, services, technology and materials are accessible and available (see Attachment P)(https://www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan). These services must be provided “on-demand” and in “real time” in the physical Comprehensive One-Stop Center location or via technology consistent with the “direct linkage” requirement defined in WIOA.

Staff Training It is imperative that if someone with a disability visits a Comprehensive One-Stop Center and requires a service, that the staff has an understanding of how to accommodate the needs of the customer. The state will use the best practices from the Disability Employment Initiative as a part of WIOA implementation and case manager training.

When appropriate, the state will also consult with staff from core partner agencies that have expertise in using or training in the areas of reasonable accommodation or assistive technology.

One-Stop Center Certification All Comprehensive One-Stop Centers must meet specific physical and programmatic accessibility criteria prescribed by the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board to be certified. This includes ensuring that the Comprehensive One-Stop Center’s location and layout are inclusive of individuals regardless of their range of abilities and mobility. This also requires the physical characteristics of the facility to comply with 29 CFR Part 37, the 2010 or most recent ADA standards for Accessible Design and the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards. Physical layout and the Comprehensive One-Stop Center location are the primary criteria for physical accessibility. Outdoor space is evaluated in areas such as the layout, location in a recognizable and high-traffic area, reasonable distance from public transportation and adequate parking.

The certification criteria specified by the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board to evaluate the Comprehensive One-Stop Center’s programmatic accessibility ensures equal access to all required programs, services and activities to eligible participants and to employers regardless of their range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, intelligence or education level. Essentially, services must be made available without unlawful discrimination. Primary criteria include: equal access to career services, equal access to program services, direct linkage and reasonable accommodations. The indoor space is evaluated to make sure there is “equal and meaningful” access to programs for individuals with disabilities. Examples include computer accessibility,
ergonomic set-up, screen-reading software programs (JAWS and DRAGON) and access to interpreters.
9. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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

ACCESSIBILITY FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

In Illinois, there is a great need for interpreters due to limited English proficiency in many portions of the state. Staff members are trained to ensure an interpreter is provided in these situations “in real time” to meet the needs of English language learners. The State of Illinois has a master contract with an interpreting service provider to offer these services.
IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

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

COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

Stakeholder Collaboration and Comment The State of Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) is responsible for overseeing the development, implementation and modification of the Unified State Plan and for convening all relevant programs, required partners and stakeholders. The state agencies responsible for the administration of the core and required programs have reviewed and commented on appropriate operational planning portion of the Unified State Plan. Illinois’ Unified State Plan was released for public comment on January 25, 2016 to allow interested stakeholders to participate in the development of the plan. The comments and responses to the Unified State Plan can be viewed in Attachment A (https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan). Illinois’ Current Strengths in Alignment of Core Partner Programs Throughout the State of Illinois, many strong partnerships already exist, with ideas and room for further alignment and expansion during WIOA implementation. The following programs and initiatives illustrate Illinois’ strength in aligning and integrating workforce and education programs.

Illinois Pathways Illinois Pathways is an innovative public-private education partnership that is organized to support local implementation of P-20 Council STEM Programs of Study by coordinating and reducing the transaction cost among statewide networks of education partners, businesses, industry associations, labor organizations and other organizations. Education and career pathways are an integrated collection of programs and services intended to develop students’ core academic, technical and employability skills; provide them with continuous education and training; and place them in high-demand, high-opportunity jobs. Illinois Pathways builds off of the National Career Clusters® Framework and supports career pathway systems in STEM application areas. The pathways are a basis for clusters of specific occupations or careers grouped together because they share similar interests, strengths and skills. More information regarding Illinois Pathways is posted at www.illinoispathways.com.

Access to Activities Leading to Recognized Postsecondary Credentials The State of Illinois is dedicated to ensuring that all students have access to rigorous and relevant educational opportunities that prepares them for success in college and careers. Illinois Career and Technical Education (CTE) provides students with the academic and technical skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century knowledge and skills-based economy. Students participating in these programs are held to specific and reliable industry-based learning standards to ensure that they are fully prepared for both postsecondary education and the high-wage, high-skill and high-demand career of their choice.

A key to a robust career pathways system is that portable, stackable credentials are incorporated fully into the system, particularly at the postsecondary level. Fortunately, in Illinois, the incorporation of portable, stackable credentials have been an ongoing commitment of the postsecondary career and technical education system since the implementation of theCarl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act (Perkins IV).

The ICCB recognized that CTE students at a community college do not always fit the model of transition implied in the Perkins IV definition. Thus, the agency moved early to adopt a more holistic
career pathways approach to implementation. For example, the ICCB CTE division partnered with Adult Education to develop an Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS). The purpose is to provide integrated CTE and Adult Education instruction, so adult students can earn at least one “stackable,” credit-bearing, post-secondary education credential as well as industry recognized credentials that lead to high-wage employment in Illinois. In integrated programs career and technical educators teach integrated classes alongside adult education instructors, ensuring that students receive not only integrated curriculum inclusive of basic skills enhancements, but also curriculum tied to the latest in industry standards developed in partnership with employers.

Community colleges, four-year colleges and universities in Illinois play a key role in helping residents pursue credentials that will help them access high-skill, high-wage jobs. Partnerships with high schools ensure graduates are college-ready, and dual credit opportunities, transfer assistance, recognition for prior learning, and other innovative approaches help learners, particularly low-income individuals, move through the P-20 pipeline.

Pathways to Results Initiative (PTR) In Perkins IV, effective partnerships are viewed as essential to help all students meet college and career readiness expectations (Nicholson-Tosh & Kirby, 2013 http://occrl.illinois.edu/files/Projects/ptr/Modules/PTR%20Module%201.pdf). One of the most effective ways in which the post-secondary CTE system has modeled good partnerships in Illinois is through the implementation of the Pathways to Results (PTR) initiative. An effort led by the Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, PTR has been utilized in over 100 post-secondary CTE programs across the state. PTR is an outcome-focused process, guided by equity considerations and targeting the improvement of pathways and policies that support the transition of students into post-secondary education.

Within the context of PTR, community colleges must fully and completely engage both internal and external stakeholders in their career pathways work. To do this, colleges are encouraged to develop partnerships based upon sound principles—setting goals and outcomes, defining the structure of governance, identifying a strategy for operation, evaluating success and considering sustainability. Stakeholders representing all sectors of industry and education should be at the table under the PTR model. By way of example, PTR is a five-step continuous quality improvement process. During phase one, partners are at the center of the phase and thus provide a perfect model for fully engaging partners to pursue other resources. Among the elements required as a part of this first phase are the identification and engagement of leaders that support the improvement of pathways or programs of study, including secondary, post-secondary, business and industry, adult education, workforce development, community-based organizations and others and who guide P-20 education systems change. PTR is an excellent model to utilize for the purpose of leveraging resources in order to provide enhanced access to workforce development programs at the states’ community colleges and across post-secondary CTE programs.

Bridge Programs The goal of bridge programs is to sequentially bridge the gap between the initial skills of individuals and what they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and career-path employment. The state’s bridge programs prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in post-secondary education and training leading to career-path employment in demand occupations as identified by the local labor market information. Illinois has had a unified bridge definition between the community college system and the workforce since 2010. Bridge programs must be built on the criteria below to be an approved program in the state.
• The delivery of bridge programs does not have to be through an eligible training provider with a certified training program; they may be provided by: o An approved and funded Adult Education program; o The credit or non-credit department(s) of a community college; or o Community-based organization (CBO) or other type of provider that offers non-credit workforce training.

• Training programs may be offered by a single entity (e.g., a community college or a CBO) or by a partnership (e.g., a CBO and a community college). Regardless of the provider, they:
  o May provide opportunities to earn college credit (such as through escrow credit accounts);
  o May offer dual enrollment in credit and non-credit programs; or
  o May offer a multi-level program that moves people from an adult education course offered by one provider to a non-credit occupational course offered by the same or another provider.

• All bridge program providers must use pre-skill assessments consistent with program requirements to place students into the appropriate courses as well as post-skill assessments to measure progress. All providers will use data tracking systems to collect and analyze key information about bridge program participants and graduates.

Under WIOA, the partners will update and enhance the current bridge definition policy by engaging Title I, Title II, and college credit leaders and providers to learn what is working with the current policy and what could be adjusted to ensure that bridge programs are more widely implemented across Illinois. Any new policy developed around the bridge definition and model will cut across all four core partner programs to ensure services are maximized for the students in the adult education programs. Furthermore, information garnered from the review of the definition, will inform new initiatives that promote sector-based pre-bridge and bridge activities, enhance and expand bridge programs offerings, and align with core partner WIOA requirements. The focus will be to expand access and success in these sector-based bridge programs across all WIOA partners, as a way to braid funding to ensure an integrated approach to service. As the leader in the development of bridge programs for Illinois, ICCB will use their lessons learned to help expand the program model across partners.

Labor Market Data All core partners use a common set of labor market information data produced by Employment Security, including but not limited to, industry and occupational employment projections. The data team from the core partners worked together to compile a list of occupations that are in-demand, based on regional needs, a list which will be continuously updated as occupational demand evolves in each region. Maintenance of the demand occupation list leads to the identification of the key occupational competencies required by businesses, which in turn will lead to adjustments by training providers to ensure students leaving programs are ready to be productive as they enter the workforce.

Work-Based Learning Initiatives and Training Roundtables Work-based learning (WBL) provides more opportunities for workers to earn income while gaining critical job skills. To prepare for the WIOA requirements, the state has coordinated a number of roundtable events over the last two years highlighting the importance of work-based learning, with a specific emphasis on using these training strategies to support industry sector initiatives. Additional technical assistance will provide the opportunity to institutionalize best practices and expand the impact of WBL employers, job seekers and the workforce system. There are a number of programs and initiatives that support work-based learning in Illinois including:
- WIOA requires a minimum of 20 percent of youth funding to be dedicated to work-based learning.
- Illinois’ $6.1 million 2014 Job Driven and $4 million Sector-Based National Emergency Grants focus on work-based learning strategies.
- Illinois was awarded three projects totaling $9.3 million as part of the $175 American Apprenticeship initiative.
- The Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing Program has resulted in a number of best practices, including the blending of traditional occupational training and work-based learning strategies, as well as providing valuable experience in cross-program collaboration for client recruitment and intake, case management, training, supportive services and job placement.
- Illinois agencies have a strong track record of partnering with other agencies on implementing summer employment opportunities to provide youth with work experience that is linked to work-readiness training and career pathways.

Technology Accessibility The disability community is on the forefront of technology, which makes it vital to stay up-to-date with technology statewide, especially when purchasing new equipment (e.g., ensuring that systems are compatible with screen readers, speech recognition, etc.). Vocational Rehabilitation, Rehabilitation Technology Section, houses experts in the field of technology accessibility. Technical assistance is provided by this unit to other state agencies. For example, website design accessibility is incredibly important, especially in portions of the state where public transportation is limited. If a request is made by another agency in the delivery system for assistance with accessibility to technology or a program, a DHS employee will be sent to assist. DHS notes that the most requested accommodations are for computer accessibility for individuals who are visually impaired and individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Business Service Coordination Vocational Rehabilitation is working with Commerce on the development of a business engagement strategy as part of a national technical assistance effort funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute for Community Inclusion. This effort is focused on engaging businesses throughout the state through job-driven vocational counseling concentrated on potential opportunities for individuals in high-growth sectors. Among other items, Commerce has provided Vocational Rehabilitation with assistance on utilization of regional sector-based data to target employers for participation in the project.

The core partners are also working with the DOL technical assistance consultants on a complementary effort to align business services. This project will provide the State of Illinois with an environmental scan of current business engagement and service delivery across identified workforce system partners. The product will include a “map” of current efforts to support the first step of alignment - understanding gaps, overlaps and opportunities for integration. This product will also include best practices in aligned business engagement and service delivery based on information available through Workforce3One and the contractor’s experience working in other states and regions.

Workforce Education Strategic Plan (WESP) The ICCB worked in concert with Commerce in the development of a statewide Workforce Strategic Education Plan. Eleven regional forums were held in the 10 economic development regions in the spring of 2015. Initial employment and education data was used to identify the trends as well as the supply/demand opportunities in each region of the state (See Attachment M) (https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan). The ICCB will continue the development of the WESP in the spring of 2016. The information gathered through these education planning meetings was used to inform WIOA state and regional planning efforts that began in the fall of 2015.
Integrated Education and Training (IET) The ICCB Adult Education program has developed an IET initiative to provide the opportunity for adult education students to earn industry recognized credentials, college certificates and college credit while studying to obtain the high school equivalency certificate or learn the English language. Through the IET program in Illinois, Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS), many students will be connected to Title I to ensure they have the services necessary to gain access to resources for training and employment opportunities upon completion.

Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Vocational Rehabilitation has worked effectively with Commerce around its DEI projects throughout the state. In one instance, Vocational Rehabilitation provided cooperative funding to support individuals with disabilities seeking to establish their own businesses. In another, Vocational Rehabilitation provided funding to community providers as part of an overall package including DEI funds. Vocational Rehabilitation and Commerce have a strong level of communication around the needs of the individuals being served and the goals of the projects.

Career Workshops & Rapid Response Employment Security staff in partnership with core partners hold joint workshops on a regular basis regarding various topics (i.e., resume writing, employer panels, and re-employment) as a way to educate the public on employment, as well as services provided by each core and required partner. Additionally, Commerce and Employment Security Unemployment Insurance collaborate to hold rapid response workshops for dislocated workers.

Economic Information and Analysis Employment Security provides statewide and sub-state occupational employment projections, so Commerce and LWIAs, along with other core partners, can determine in-demand occupations and community colleges can plan education and training curricula. The Interagency Work Group has established an interagency data team to develop comprehensive data reports that will be used in the state and regional plans. The data team will continue to work with the regional planning teams to provide additional data as needed. For the regions to be able to access labor market information that is specifically tied to the WIOA regional plans, the team will work on developing a vehicle to access this specific information on whichever platform is utilized for the state. Currently, Employment Security provides labor market information on the Employment Security website in a variety of formats including the Illinois Virtual Labor Market Information System (VLMI) that is supported by the DOL Workforce Information Grant and that is a required deliverable for all states.

Interagency Agreements The Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Vocational Rehabilitation) will continue to pursue development and expansion of agreements that further service integration and promote employment of people with disabilities. This includes agreements relating to services to students and youth with disabilities and transition services generally.

Illinois’ Current Strengths in the Alignment between Core Partners and Other Required Partners Illinois has initiated and continues numerous activities that engage core and required partner representatives at the state and local levels.

In an effort to provide a voice for each core and required partner, facilitate relationships between the two, and for improving alignment for WIOA implementation, an initial step was for each state agency executive to appoint a top program administrator to serve on the Interagency Work Group to address the policy, technical and programmatic details associated with integration and alignment of
workforce programs under WIOA. Attachment I (https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan) provides a list of the Interagency Work Group members and their respective State Agency.

Interagency Work Group This group of top program administrators began meeting in May 2015 and had met eight times as a full group by December 2015 and many more times as working subgroups. This group will continue to meet on a regular basis. All meetings are supported by highly structured agendas designed to bring about clarity at the state-level regarding integration and alignment under WIOA. The major accomplishments of this group include:

- Participating in a coordinated process for review of the WIOA Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, a key purpose of which was to identify issues, requirements and opportunities of common interest and concern;
- Reaching an agreement on the specific career services and workforce programs and activities each required partner will make available at One-Stop Comprehensive Centers throughout Illinois, and this includes the full configuration of workforce service delivery through Comprehensive One-Stop Centers in Illinois (https://www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan);
- Working collaboratively to coordinate the different methods that will be used to deliver these services, including delivery through technology that meets the “direct linkage” requirements of WIOA;
- Providing state-level input regarding policies guiding the local implementation of governance provisions such as the initial designation of “Local Workforce Innovation Areas" (https://www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan);
- Jointly developing a strategy for defining the number and location of Comprehensive One-Stop Centers in Illinois; concurring on a general framework for cost sharing under WIOA, including a framework for sharing one-stop center infrastructure costs;
- Establishing a working subgroup of the four core program partners to develop and implement work plans for the Unified State Plan and Performance Accountability requirements, the two areas in which core program partners have unique obligations and implementation challenges. These subgroups continue to meet to work through operational details in these and other areas;
- Establishing an interagency task force to focus on operational details and mechanics associated with local and state infrastructure cost funding mechanisms under WIOA;
- Identifying initial elements to be included in the Governor's Guidelines (Attachment J) (https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan) providing direction and support regarding negotiations of program partners at the state and local levels. This process has included vetting these elements multiple times to obtain the perspectives of all key stakeholders;
- Developing suggested content for the required guidelines from the Governor and reviewing draft and final versions of these guidelines, including obtaining and incorporating suggested content from local program partners and stakeholders before final guidelines were issued by the Governor; and
- Providing input to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) regarding the criteria and process to be used for certification of Comprehensive One-Stop Centers.

Regional Meetings Illinois hosted a series of regional planning kick-off meetings in December 2015. These meetings included partner program staff from each economic development region to learn about each other’s programs, review regional demographic and program data and learn to use a data-driven planning approach. Using a format developed by the state, they also began to work on a planning framework specific to their region. Approximately 500 individuals attended these events and had the opportunity to ask questions and determine how their programs could contribute to the
overall success of the region. In late February 2016 the IWIB and the Inter-Agency Team held a two-day statewide regional planning technical assistance summit. Planning teams from the ten economic development regions gathered in Springfield to: 1) give an update on how they were progressing with their planning efforts; 2) meet in person with their planning facilitator from Maher & Maher; 3) see the leaders of the WIOA core partners sharing the stage and presenting a unified message; 4) attend breakout sessions covering practical planning topics such as employer-led sector-based partnerships, business engagement and using labor market information to be data and demand driven; and 5) engage in structured peer networking. Nearly 300 regional planning team members attended the event.

They had the opportunity to interact with business leaders from across the state to hear first-hand how to go about developing sustainable public-private partnerships. Attendees also could ask questions of the all the WIOA public program leaders and each other to share best practices and lessons learned from each region. The event also had a dedicated “Data Room” open throughout the event where labor market information experts were available to help teams interpret the meaning of the economic and labor market data in their region. The IWIB and the Inter-Agency team is committed to continuing technical assistance efforts such as this to foster relationships between the state, regional and local levels and also cross-cutting relationships between business and programs throughout all levels across the state.

WIOA Wednesday Webinars Interactive webinars are held weekly to provide a platform for interagency partners to discuss integral WIOA implementation topics. The widely attended webinars provide a forum for questions and increase awareness of the required partner programs, activities and resources.

Illinois Works Together Updates To facilitate common and ongoing communications, the Interagency Work Group initiated a joint monthly newsletter entitled “Illinois Works Together” to provide a source of common information about WIOA implementation progress for all local program partners and stakeholders. This newsletter will continue as long as needed. Additionally, the ICCB collaborated with the partners to release a newsletter to highlight WIOA activities providing a better understanding of partner agencies requirements to the adult education and career and technical education community.

Career Connect System A key element moving forward is the capacity to use information systems to improve communication and increase the movement of information critical for providing assistance to job seekers. Vocational Rehabilitation has partnered with the Chicago-Cook Workforce Partnership (CCWP) on a data sharing software project designed to improve mutual referrals and communication (internet based referrals). Although limited to one geographic area, this project will enable Vocational Rehabilitation to test new data infrastructure options. Commerce has also worked with CCWP to connect this interface with the Title IB case management system (Illinois Workforce Development System).

Career Pathways Model The career pathways model is one that is fairly new to the Vocational Rehabilitation system. Vocational Rehabilitation is creating training opportunities for Vocational Rehabilitation counselors to improve their understanding of career cluster concepts and in methods of incorporating those concepts in developing employment plans for people with disabilities. The initial focus of the training will be on transition age youth with disabilities, but also will be extended to individuals with disabilities of all ages. Coordination with the Employment and Economic Development for Persons with Disabilities Task Force created under Illinois’ Employment First initiative will be an important resource for increasing competitive integrated employment for citizens.
with disabilities. Members of the task force, who include people with disabilities, business representatives, and state agency officials, are focused on the same outcomes as those in the WIOA Unified State Plan: integrated service delivery, robust engagement with business, competitiveness and accessibility, cross-agency collaboration and alignment of results-driven practices.

Challenges Core Partners Face in Pursuing Additional Alignment WIOA implementation has brought to the surface several challenges, including a lack of awareness among partners regarding other programs and requirements, as well as supportive services. Although major strides have been made since the implementation of the Interagency Work Group, the need for new and stronger relationships was identified.

Core partners in Illinois realize that there are significant data system limitations. The main barrier to joint case management is the inability to share data through a streamlined process due to the lack of common participant identification method. Federal laws governing some programs limit data sharing, and the information collected is not aligned across core partners due to statutory regulations (e.g., Adult Education does not require a Social Security Number to receive services). Currently, core partners collect their data using their respective state agency systems. There is currently no ability to track participants across programs and no mechanism to identify when a participant has exited from all applicable WIOA core programs. To begin to overcome these challenges, Illinois is exploring a “Common Framework Approach” and is seeking additional federal guidance from DOL and the U.S. Department of Education. In the meantime, core program partners are collaboratively developing a working definition of “exit” to ensure continuity across programs. A common identifier or “common participant ID” across the core programs is also under consideration.

Other challenges include core program statutory requirements serving as roadblocks to alignment. For example, Vocational Rehabilitation intake by other entities is prohibited because only Vocational Rehabilitation staff are permitted or allowed to handle “non-delegable functions” by statute. This is also an issue with the administration of the training component of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act as it specifically relates to the state merit staff administrative requirement.

While core partners recognize measurable skills gains as critical to the effectiveness of state and local workforce innovation systems, the definition and parameters of measurable skills gains are lacking, as are the standards for assessment tools, methods and measures for employer satisfaction.

Illinois is also challenged by geographical and local boundaries alignment. Some boundaries do not perfectly align with LWIA boundaries. For example, under Adult Education, “Area Planning Councils districts” do not align with LWIAs, but they are aligned with Community College Districts.

Finally, the state is also interested in examining best practices to support the planning and coordination of workforce, education and economic development services in interstate regions.

Despite these challenges, Illinois is positioned to address these challenges through the Interagency Work Group that is creatively and collaboratively working to find solutions and to create new opportunities.

Opportunities for Future Alignment between Core Partners Desired systemic improvements of various levels of specificity, most of which involve some level of service integration, were identified by the core partners. One of the first items of interest is to integrate service delivery, especially at the front end of the process. As part of this plan, the goal of service integration is to ensure that every
individual seeking help has the opportunity to take advantage of the full range of services for which they are eligible regardless of which partner program sees them first. The initial step toward this goal is ensuring informed, effective program liaisons are the first point of contact at a one-stop center. These liaisons will be cross-trained to be knowledgeable about all programs available at the one-stop center and will be responsible for guiding walk-in customers to the appropriate program staff.

State agency partners also have the opportunity to improve the coordination and delivery of career services and case management services through state and regional initiatives to promote leading business practices. They also will promote the ongoing professional development of front-line staff providing client services through case management academies and national professional development and credentialing programs.

Core and required partners in Illinois are working towards the development of a common intake system. The first step is the development of a “smart referrals” system. A portal will need to be developed for auto-referrals. The group hopes to learn from an existing “Career Connect System” between Vocational Rehabilitation and the Chicago-Cook Workforce Partnership. Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation see a great need to connect adults with learning disabilities to vocational rehabilitation services. Vocational Rehabilitation involvement through community colleges has traditionally been through the disability services offices; however, this is mostly focused on students pursuing degrees. One idea is to reach out to this existing connection to see if there are other applicable types of trainings using the resources at the community college. Disability offices tend to work with people coming from high school and self-identifying as having a disability, whereas adults might develop a condition later in life or have an undiagnosed disability that meets vocational rehabilitation eligibility requirements.

Overall, this system will improve coordinated client tracking, giving partners the ability to view when a client “exits” a program or completes a training. For example, it is important for Employment Security to see confirmation when a customer is “job ready” because then it may assist the customer in finding employment through the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program staff. This brings the customer back full circle and carries out the mission of WIOA.

Other efforts and opportunities for data integration also include applying a GIS mapping analysis to illustrate the location of training providers, employers and workers or job seekers throughout Illinois. This will help show the distance between training providers and employers, the lack of access to training providers in some areas and sources of employees for employers. Eventually, the mapping could be used across required programs to map the distance customers must travel to access services throughout local workforce delivery systems.

In the past, there was a high-level of variability in terms of core partner participation in workforce board activities, as well as in communication around service issues. Core partners are making a coordinated effort to ensure their staff participates with local workforce boards. For example, Vocational Rehabilitation moved to strengthen involvement in all LWIAs so that individuals with disabilities can benefit from the workforce system regardless of where they live.

Core and required partners in Illinois recognize that the key to successful alignment is constant, clear communication. Significant effort will be required to establish and maintain effective channels of communication. However, the return on investment is potentially enormous when compared to the improved efficiency and effectiveness of our programs and outcomes for our customers.
V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that—

1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts; Yes

2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes; Yes

3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs; Yes

4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board; Yes

5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities; Yes

6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3); Yes

7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable; Yes

8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program; Yes

9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs; Yes

10. The State has a One-Stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all One-Stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); Yes
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and  Yes

12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.  Yes
VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.
The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B--
A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

A. IDENTIFY THE REGIONS AND THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS DESIGNATED IN THE STATE.

For purposes of WIOA, the 102 counties in Illinois are grouped into ten Economic Development Regions (EDR) and twenty-two (22) Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIA). The regions range from a relatively compact four counties in the Northern Stateline region to the much larger nineteen (19) county Southern region.

The 22 LWIAs range from six (6) single-county LWIAs to an area with 14 counties. All but one of the single-county LWIAs are located in the Northeastern Economic Development Region that covers the greater Chicagoland area. There are a small number of instances where the EDRs cross LWIA boundaries. The Governor designated ten EDRs that are also used for the purposes of alignment with workforce development. Here is a list of counties in each region:

- Region 1 (Central (12 counties)) - Cass, Christian, Greene, Logan, Macon, Macoupin, Menard, Montgomery, Morgan, Sangamon, Scott, Shelby Counties.
- Region 2 (East Central (6 counties)) - Champaign, Douglas, Ford, Iroquois, Piatt, Vermilion Counties.
- Region 3 (North Central (10 counties)) - De Witt, Fulton, Livingston, Mc Lean, Marshall, Mason, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, Woodford Counties.
- Region 4 (Northeast (10 counties)) - Cook, De Kalb, Du Page, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, Mc Henry, Will Counties.
- Region 5 (Northern Stateline (4 counties)) - Boone, Ogle, Stephenson, Winnebago Counties.
- Region 6 (Northwest (10 counties)) - Bureau, Carroll, Henry, Jo Daviess, La Salle, Lee, Mercer, Putnam, Rock Island, Whiteside Counties.
- Region 7 (Southeastern (13 counties)) - Clark, Clay, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, Edgar, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, Lawrence, Marion, Moultrie, Richland Counties.
- Region 9 (Southwestern (9 counties)) - Bond, Calhoun, Clinton, Jersey, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair, Washington Counties.
- Region 10 (West Central (9 counties)) - Adams, Brown, Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, Pike, Schuyler, Warren Counties.
In looking at the map of Illinois' EDRs and LWIAs one will notice the 22 local areas are numbered up to "26". This is due to local area consolidations that have taken place in recent years. To reduce confusion among state and local stakeholders, it was decided to use the lowest number of the consolidating areas. One will notice local areas 8, 9, 12 and 16 no longer appear on the map. The map is also provided as Attachment S at www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan.
B. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR DESIGNATING LOCAL AREAS, INCLUDING PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING WHETHER THE LOCAL AREA MET THE CRITERIA FOR “PERFORMED SUCCESSFULLY” AND “SUSTAINED FISCAL INTEGRITY” IN ACCORDANCE WITH 106(B)(2) AND (3) OF WIOA. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR IDENTIFYING REGIONS AND PLANNING REGIONS UNDER SECTION 106(A) OF WIOA. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE CONSULTED WITH THE LOCAL BOARDS AND CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS IN IDENTIFYING THE REGIONS.

Procedures for Determining if Local Areas Met the Criteria for “Performed Successfully”

Illinois issued the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Transition Policy 1 to address the initial designation of local areas as required by WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) Number 27-14 that was issued by the United States Department of Labor (DOL). The process for designating Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIA) under WIOA was established by WIOA Transition Policy 1, issued on April 23, 2015 (see Attachment L at www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan). This policy letter describes conditions necessary for the Governor to approve a request to designate an area, defines “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” as required by the Act. “The term “performed successfully” used with respect to a local area, means the local area met or exceeded the adjusted levels of performance for core indicators of performance described in Section 136(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, as in effect the day before the date of enactment of WIOA for each of the last two (2) consecutive years for which data are available preceding the determination of performance under this paragraph;” “The term “sustained fiscal integrity”, used with respect to a local area, means that the Secretary of Labor has not made a formal determination, during within of the last two (2) consecutive years preceding the determination regarding such integrity, that either the grant recipient or the administrative entity of the area misappropriated funds provided under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (as in effect prior to the effective date of WIOA subtitle B) due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration.” The conditions necessary for the governor to designate a local area as described in the policy letter are:

- The local area was designated under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 on or before July 1, 2012.
- The local area successfully met or exceeded adjusted performance requirements for core indicators under Section 136(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 for each of the most recent two consecutive years for which data are available.
- The local area did not receive a declaration of having failed to sustain fiscal integrity for the two prior program years by the Secretary of Labor.
- All county Chief Elected Officials (CEO) within a current LWIA, following a review of all current operations of the local area and by signature on the request, agree to all matters with regard to the request for designation by the state of the current local area. The majority (20 of 22) of the local workforce areas in Illinois met the criteria outlined in Section 1.A of TEGL 27-14. All of the Chief Elected Officials that met these criteria, in consultation with the local workforce boards, submitted a request to be designated as a local area under WIOA.
Procedures for Determining if Local Areas Sustained Fiscal Integrity

In determining whether the grant recipient/administrative entity in the local area sustained fiscal integrity, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity reviewed the following for the two-year period immediately preceding Program Year 2015: 1) Formal determinations of disallowed costs and non-compliance as documented by reports of the state’s WIA/WIOA monitoring, single audits and DOL monitoring (if applicable); 2) Results of investigations of incident reports alleging gross negligence, fraud, abuse or other misconduct; and 3) Formal communication of high-risk status and/or suspension of cash payments resulting from continued violations of administrative requirements and grant terms and conditions and the subsequent corrective actions implemented by the local area to correct the violations. The implementation of the Illinois Grant Accountability and Transparency Act will also establish standard pre-award, establishment and grant administration procedures across all state agencies. This will add another set of tools that will be used to ensure that the grant recipient sustains fiscal integrity.

Process Used to Determine Regions and Planning Regions

Illinois was fortunate in being able to leverage an existing regional alignment that was based on significant economic research. Regional Planning Areas were designated to align with the state’s ten Economic Development Regions (EDRs). These ten regions address the WIOA Section 106 requirement that the Governor identify and organize local workforce boards and core program partners into regional planning areas to engage in joint planning, coordinate service delivery, share administrative costs and enter into regional coordination efforts with economic development agencies operating in the same region. The ten regions were first established in 2003 by the Governor based on a comprehensive analysis of statewide commuting patterns surrounding major and minor metropolitan centers, key transportation linkages, and other economic factors. In late 2014, a new analysis of the state was completed and the data confirmed this regional alignment is still appropriate. These findings were presented to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board and Illinois Workforce Partnership, which represents the 22 local workforce areas, prior to the decision to maintain the existing boundaries. The Illinois Workforce Partnership was asked to inform the IWIB and the Department if there were any concerns with maintaining the regional boundaries; and only positive feedback was received on this question.

In early 2015, the Department collaborated with the Illinois Community College Board and the Department of Employment Security on creating a strategic plan for workforce and education. As part of this project, Commerce and ICCB made the local areas and community college districts aware the data indicated the EDRs were still valid. Local area CEOs and LWIB chairs were invited to multiple opportunities to raise concerns and objections on the continued use of the existing economic development regions during the 2014-2015 ICCB planning initiative, including stakeholder meetings held in each of the 10 regions.

Furthermore, receiving no dissenting feedback from the CEOs and local workforce board chairs, Commerce, IDES and ICCB jointly announced our intent to strengthen the linkages of all our efforts to economic development by using these regions as the base for community college and WIOA planning regardless of community college district and LWIA alignments. As part of the ICCB planning initiative, data packets for each region were prepared that included a map showing how the community college districts and LWIAs overlapped with the planning regions (See Attachment M at www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan). To promote continuity from the ICCB planning, these data packets are also being used by WIOA regional planning teams.
Following the ICCB initiative, we transitioned into Phase 2 of our joint planning, the WIOA regional plans. CEOs and LWIB chairs were specifically invited to participate collectively in statewide WIOA regional planning webinars on October 14, October 22 and November 3, 2015 where the topic of alignment of regions was covered in depth. No objections were raised and all concurred the existing regional alignment should be retained.

Following these statewide interactive webinars, CEOs and LWIB chairs were again invited to attend in-person regional planning summit meetings held December 9-11, 2015 to represent their respective regions. The Governor has approved the requests for twenty LWIAs for initial designation using the aforementioned criteria. The CEOs of the remaining two local areas (LWIAs 4 and 15), in consultation with the local workforce boards, submitted a request letter under Section 1.B of TEGL 27-14, which provides that under the following conditions, the Governor may approve a request for initial designation as a LWIA under WIOA from any area that was designated as a local area under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, but failed to meet all requirements of Section 1.A above. Each of these areas was involved in a consolidation with an adjacent local area during the time frame set forth, and each would have been eligible to apply under Section 1.A had their performance data not been impacted by the local area being absorbed.

C. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 106(B)(5) OF WIOA RELATING TO DESIGNATION OF LOCAL AREAS.

Illinois WIOA Transition Policy 1 provides that the Governor’s decision regarding local area requests for initial designation may be appealed in accordance with Sections 679.290 of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. The policy also describes conditions under which the governor may approve a request for initial designation as a local workforce development area under WIOA from any area that was designated as a local area under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, but failed to meet all the aforementioned requirements; and conditions under which the governor may also designate a local workforce development area upon the request of the State Workforce Development Board.

Furthermore, the policy describes the appeals process that may be used should a local area disagree with governor’s determination and provides an application form to be filed by local area CEOs. Local areas may appeal to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board, which has 60 days to render a decision. If a decision has not been made by that time or if the appeal does not result in a designation, the entity may appeal to the Secretary of Labor.

There were no local workforce areas that appealed the Governor’s decision regarding initial designation.

D. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 121(H)(2)(E) OF WIOA RELATING TO DETERMINATIONS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING.

The appeals process relating to the determinations for infrastructure funding is outlined in the Governor’s guidelines, included as Attachment H (www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan). The appeals process is mentioned in Section 6 and Item 12 in the Glossary.

Local areas may appeal the governor’s determination on the sharing of one-stop infrastructure costs on the basis the determination is inconsistent with federal proportionate share requirements or the federal cost contribution caps. The appeal must be made within 21 days of the governor’s determination.
Any appeal under this section is to be filed with the Interagency Work Group, which has thirty days
to rule on the appeal. Should the plaintiff wish, the local area CEO(s) may request the Illinois
Workforce Innovation Board to hear its appeal. The Board has thirty days to either hear the appeal
and render a decision or inform the plaintiff of its decision to not hear the appeal. In instances where
the Board refuses to hear the appeal the determination of the Interagency Work Group stands.

2. STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

A. PROVIDE STATE POLICIES OR GUIDANCE FOR THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE
   DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND FOR USE OF STATE FUNDS FOR WORKFORCE
   INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES.

The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) oversees the administration
of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title IB and Trade Adjustment Assistance
Training programs. As administrator, Commerce issues policy guidance through its series of policy
letters and notices that are posted on the Illinois workNet portal
(https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Pages/WIA-WIOAPolicies.aspx). Commerce has
issued guidance on the implementation and administration of WIOA for the following activities:

- Data Management and Reporting
- Fiscal Reporting and Accountability
- General Administration
- Governance
- Performance Management
- Planning
- Program Eligibility
- Training

More specifically, the following policies have been developed and issued through Commerce’s Office
of Employment and Training (OET):

- Guidance was issued to provide the Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIB), Local
  Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIA), core partner programs, service and training providers,
  sub-grantees and other interested parties with an overview of the implementation steps
  Commerce, primarily through OET, has taken to implement the provisions of WIOA. This
  insured a seamless transition for the customers during intake and the continued provision of
  career and training services, including the expanded training services described in WIOA.
  This guidance also addressed reporting requirements during and after the transition period
  as changes to the workforce data reporting system, Illinois Workforce Development System
  (IWDS), is being updated.
- Membership and certification of LWIBs under WIOA is governed under new policies that are
  consistent with the new provisions including the assurance of more streamlined boards, but
  with a majority of business members and minimum percentage of labor and community
  service organizations represented. Emphasis was placed on ensuring the business
  representatives reflect the regional industry sectors, labor market information (LMI) and the
  diversity among populations. This policy provided new forms for completion for nominated
  applicants to the board, as well as reiterated the process for appointees with fixed and
  staggered terms. Certification (and recertification) of the boards is conducted by OET only
  after a review of the requisite information on each local board member to ensure appropriate
composition is maintained. This process further includes reviews of LWIB bylaws, and compliance with the Sunshine Provision and parliamentary procedures.

- Policy was implemented to address chief elected officials (CEO) in each LWIA to include an understanding of their required functions, which is confirmed through a CEO agreement signed by each CEO in the LWIA. The agreement further addresses those LWIAs that have multiple CEOs when there is more than one unit of general local government residing within the boundaries of the area. CEOs are given the authority as the local grant recipient, including the authority to designate local grant subrecipients and fiscal agents for the Title IB funds of WIOA. It also defines each CEO’s liability for WIOA funds determined to be misspent or used for unallowable purposes.

- Eligibility policies have been written to ensure all of the requirements of WIOA are clearly outlined for the local areas and their staff providing the intake and registration of customers. ALL customers of the system, whether served by local one-stop staff, through technology, or self-served, are included in the general eligibility policy. Those seeking more than self-service assistance are then determined eligible based on the funding stream they will be served under including the youth, adult, and dislocated worker populations. Detailed descriptions of the eligibility requirements and documentation sources allowed confirming such eligibility decisions provide guidance to the career planner in their decision making. The documentation is further outlined to determine low-income status, veteran or qualified spouse of a veteran status, and identity and employment eligibility. Priority of service is emphasized throughout to ensure veterans preference is provided over non-veterans who might otherwise be determined eligible under a particular program.

- WIOA policy was issued to provide guidance to all training providers (including new providers and those previously provided transitional eligibility) and the LWIB and LWIA on the process for determining eligibility of providers and training programs. It is intended that this policy letter is interim until further guidance is received by the United States Department of Labor (DOL) and final changes are made to the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS). As Illinois awaits final guidance, specifically related to performance of training providers and programs, Illinois has required LWIAs develop and implement local policies as necessary. The policy includes initial and continued eligibility of all providers, with separate guidance for those Registered Apprenticeships choosing to be added to the eligible training provider list (ETPL). In limited instances, there are exceptions for when a training provider is not required to apply for eligibility determination by the local boards. In addition to the IWDS system which is the main intake point for applications of eligibility by training providers and for their training programs, the state’s online workforce system, Illinois workNet, will maintain information on ALL eligible training providers and their programs, as well as performance information as it becomes available. This list highlights those programs that meet the state’s requirements for in-demand occupations. The current procedures are currently under review by a work group to address the performance collection requirements for ALL students, streamline the current approval process for eligibility, and make suggestions for changes to the reporting system.

- Recently, the IWIB approved new procedures for communications between the board, its executive committee, and the interagency work group especially as they pertain to the continued implementation of WIOA. Specifically, this guidance will inform the Illinois workforce system how to implement WIOA statutory requirements for the upcoming Program Year 2016 (beginning July 1, 2016). It also provides guidance and instructions regarding the Program Year 2016 (PY’16): 1) Regional and Local Planning Requirements, 2) Governor’s Guidelines to State and Local Program Partners Negotiating Costs and Services under WIOA, and 3) Criteria and Procedures for Certifying Comprehensive One-Stop Centers under WIOA. This Notice will provide a framework for program activities until WIOA regulations and applicable state policy is finalized.
Under a work group structure, Illinois has begun development of new policy to address all of the types of training services allowed under WIOA. The first of these training options was on-the-job training (OJT) for which recent policy was issued. General requirements for all OJT's outline the guidance for potential new employees or eligible underemployed workers that provide an opportunity for acquisition of new skills or knowledge essential to job performance. Eligibility of participants and employers, including apprenticeships, addresses the types of customers (job seeker, incumbent worker and business) allowed through OJT contracts. To ensure proper implementation, local workforce boards are required to set policy for OJT's. The employer reimbursement scale is detailed to both attract businesses and ensure they have a level of accountability to the training program and customer’s success. Monitoring and evaluation guidance assures further accountability. A comprehensive list of all WIOA policies and guidance issued is provided in Attachment U at www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan.

- Title IB Policy 15-WIOA-3.1 titled Annual Allocation and Modification Requirement of WIOA Formula Grant Funds provides guidelines by which the Title IB Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) formula grants shall be established and modified. The State will provide additional guidance through an annual funding notice that includes information regarding on the formula allocations and any additional guidance that is applicable to the program year funds.
- Title IB Policy 10-PL-62 titled Incentives and Sanctions for Performance a required statewide activity policy related to the Title IB incentive bonus awards and sanctions associated with exceeding and failing negotiated performance standards. In addition, it provides the bonus incentive measures related to completion of training in a demand occupation and subsequent employment in that occupation.
- Title IB Policy 11-PL-01, Change 1 titled Dislocated Worker Emergency Assistance Application outlines a statewide Rapid Response policy to provide additional assistance to local areas that experience disasters, mass layoffs, or plant closings, or other events that precipitate substantial increases in the number of unemployed individuals, carried out in local areas by the State, working in conjunction with the local boards and the chief elected officials for the local areas.

B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO USE GOVERNOR’S SET ASIDE FUNDING. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE RAPID RESPONSE FUNDS TO RESPOND TO LAYOFFS AND PLANT CLOSINGS AND COORDINATE SERVICES TO QUICKLY AID COMPANIES AND THEIR AFFECTED WORKERS. STATES ALSO SHOULD DESCRIBE ANY LAYOFF AVERSION STRATEGIES THEY HAVE IMPLEMENTED TO ADDRESS AT RISK COMPANIES AND WORKERS

Commerce will work with the core partners to implement the strategies and activities outlined in the Unified Plan. Governor’s set aside funding will be used as appropriate to support inter-agency initiatives that leverage formula funding sources. There are four general categories of activity that Illinois will support with these funds.

Collaboration While collaboration between and among state, regional and local organizations will also be part of the activities described below, we think it is critical to highlight cross-program, multi-level collaboration as a primary activity we will pursue under WIOA. In this administration, the role of workforce development has been elevated as other programs have made the connection of how their efforts are impacted by the availability of skilled workers. As such, the workforce development team is increasingly being involved in conversations and efforts with additional organizations.
For example, the Illinois Department of Health and Human Services (IHHS) is the point agency for setting standards on determining self-sufficiency in Illinois. The State’s economy varies widely from region to region. Commerce’s Office of Employment and Training is part of this IHHS inter-agency team working to establish parameters that allow for regional economic differences. We will continue to provide information and staff support to these types of groups to the benefit of WIOA participants.

Innovative Workforce Pilots & Research Commerce is interested in pilot projects that integrate the workforce, education and economic development services that respond to the talent pipeline needs of businesses within regions. Priority consideration will be given to regional projects that:

- Implement innovative programs and strategies designed to meet the needs of business, which programs and strategies may include incumbent worker training programs, customized training, sectoral and industry cluster strategies and implementation of industry or sector partnerships, and career pathway programs. Projects may include microenterprise and entrepreneurial training and support programs, utilization of effective business intermediaries, layoff aversion strategies, activities to improve linkages between workforce partners, and other business services and strategies that better engage employers in workforce investment activities and make the workforce development system more relevant to the needs of the State and local businesses.
- Develop and/or implement education and training programs that respond to the labor market analysis within the region(s). Projects should ensure that training credentials are portable and stackable and participants are allowed to accelerate through the program.

Priority Populations Pilots Commerce is interested in regional projects that break down barriers to accessing job-driven training that will result in employment opportunities for all Illinois workers. Projects may focus on:

- Developing strategies for effectively serving individuals with barriers to employment and for coordinating programs and services among workforce partners. Projects may include the integration of employment and training activities with:
  o Child support services, and assistance provided by State and local agencies carrying out Part D of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 651, et seq.);
  o Cooperative extension programs carried out by the Illinois Department of Agriculture;
  o Programs carried out in local areas for individuals with disabilities, including programs carried out by State agencies relating to intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities, activities carried out by Statewide Independent Living Councils established under Section 705 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 796d), programs funded under Part B of Chapter 1 of Title VII of such Act (29 U.S.C. 796e, et seq.), and activities carried out by centers for independent living, as defined in Section 702 of such Act (29 U.S.C. 796a);
  o Programs that target services to out of school youth in the Juvenile Justice System;
  o Programs that target services to out of school youth in the Child Welfare System;
  o Adult education and literacy activities, including those provided by public libraries;
  o Activities in the corrections system that assist ex-offenders in reentering the workforce; and
  o Digital literacy and financial literacy activities.
- Supporting the development of alternative, evidence-based programs and other activities that enhance the choices available to eligible youth and encourage such youth to reenter and complete secondary education, enroll in postsecondary education and advanced training,
progress through a career pathway, and enter into unsubsidized employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency.

Statewide Technical Assistance, Capacity Building Activities & Evaluation

The Department of Commerce is interested in state and regional projects that will assist in the effective and efficient implementation of WIOA regulations. Projects may focus on:

- Providing technical assistance to, as appropriate, local boards, chief elected officials, one-stop operators, workforce partners and eligible providers, in local areas. Projects will identify which provision of technical assistance is appropriate, including the development and training of staff and the development of exemplary program activities. Projects may also provide technical assistance to local areas that fail to meet local performance accountability measures described in WIOA regulations.
- Providing technical assistance to improve the integration of case management, training services, supportive services, business services and employer engagement among workforce, education and economic development partners.

There are many technical assistance activities planned that just a few months ago fell under innovation. Many components of our Workforce Innovation Fund initiative are now codified into the new program. Sector Strategies, work-based learning, accelerated training, enhanced cross-program career services, lean principles, using dashboards to better track program services and participant progress and outcomes, talent flow analysis and communicating business competencies have been underway in Illinois as innovation efforts over the last three years. Under WIOA these activities will be scaled up statewide. Cross-program live and virtual peer networking and business engagement will crossover into technical assistance and capacity building. The following capacity building efforts will be a priority under WIOA, and the Department will provide staff support and other funding as needed to leverage advances in these areas:

- Sector Strategies
- Talent Pipeline Management
- Career Pathways for Economic Advancement
- Coordinated and enhanced career services
- Expanded access to Labor Market Information
- Improved public-private data infrastructure

The State of Illinois will also place greater emphasis on not only identifying which practices work well and those that do not, but also understanding why. Governor’s discretionary funding will support activities such as: data collection, activity and outcomes tracking, reporting and evaluation. This will include expanding the benchmark report and developing other tools that will inform policy-making and improvements in service delivery and participant outcomes. Across all these types of activity, where feasible, Governor’s discretionary funds will be used to leverage additional investments from other public and private sources.

C. IN ADDITION, DESCRIBE THE STATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO PROVIDE RAPID RESPONSES IN CASES OF NATURAL DISASTERS INCLUDING COORDINATION WITH FEMA AND OTHER ENTITIES.

The Department of Commerce is the lead state agency for coordinating rapid response activity in Illinois. The Rapid Response Team includes the Department of Commerce Rapid Response Staff, IDES Staff, Local Workforce Area Staff and other partners, as appropriate.
These partners coordinate efforts to make impacted workers and businesses aware of available services, eligibility requirements and the application process.

The Illinois Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act, requires employers to provide 60 days advance notice of pending plant closures or mass layoffs. The law applies to “business enterprises” with 75 or more employees (excluding part-time employees). A covered “mass layoff” under Illinois WARN is a reduction in force (“RIF”) at a single site of employment that is not the result of a “plant closing” and results in employment losses during any 30-day period (or, in some cases, during any 90-day period) for at least 33% of the employees and at least 25 employees, or at least 250 employees regardless of the percentage. While rapid response is required for closures and mass layoffs, it is the Department of Commerce’s policy that effective rapid response services are to be provided to as many workers and companies as possible. Rapid Response funds will be used to administer all of the required and allowable activities outlined in WIOA, including, but not limited to:

- Layoff aversion activities;
- Immediate and on-sit contact with the employer, representatives of the affected workers and the local community;
- The provision of information and access to unemployment compensation benefits and programs, such as short-time compensation, comprehensive one-stop system services, and employment and training activities, including information on the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, Pell Grants, the GI Bill, and other resources;
- The delivery of other necessary services and resources including workshops and classes, use of worker transition centers, and job fairs, to support reemployment efforts for affected workers;
- Partnership with the local board(s) and chief elected official(s) to ensure a coordinated response to the dislocation event and, as needed, obtain access to state or local economic development assistance. Such coordinated response may include the development of an application for a national dislocated worker grant as provided under WIOA;
- The provision of emergency assistance adapted to the particular layoff or disaster;
- Developing systems and processes for identifying and gathering information for early warning of potential layoffs or opportunities for layoff aversion, analyzing, and acting upon, data and information on dislocations and other economic activity in the state, region, or local area; and tracking outcome and performance data and information related to the activities of the rapid response program;
- Developing and maintaining partnerships with other appropriate federal, state and local agencies and officials, employer associations, technical councils, other industry business councils, labor organizations, and other public and private organizations, as applicable, in order to:
  - Conduct strategic planning activities to develop strategies for addressing dislocation events and ensuring timely access to a broad range of necessary assistance;
  - Develop mechanisms for gathering and exchanging information and data relating to potential dislocations, resources available, and the customization of layoff aversion or rapid response activities, to ensure the ability to provide rapid response services as early as possible;
- Delivery of services to worker groups for which a petition for Trade Adjustment Assistance has been filed;
- The provision of additional assistance and funding to local areas that experience disasters, layoffs, or other dislocation events when such events exceed the capacity of the local area to respond with existing resources; and
• Provision of guidance and financial assistance as appropriate, in establishing a labor management committee if voluntarily agreed to by the employee’s bargaining representative and management. The committee may devise and oversee an implementation strategy that responds to the reemployment needs of the workers. Natural disasters create more significant impacts than economically-driven layoffs because multiple facets of individuals’ lives are disrupted, sometimes permanently and often without warning. Natural disasters in Illinois are typically related to: tornados, flooding, ice and snow, drought, and less frequently, earthquakes. State rapid response staff mobilize upon learning that a natural disaster is underway. In instances where the Federal Emergency Management Agency declares a disaster area, DOL/ETA typically provides a National Emergency Grant. The rapid response team contributes to the Department of Commerce NEG application.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE PROVIDES EARLY INTERVENTION (E.G., RAPID RESPONSE) TO WORKER GROUPS ON WHOSE BEHALF A TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA) PETITION HAS BEEN FILED. (SECTION 134(A)(2)(A).) THIS DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE HOW THE STATE DISSEMINATES BENEFIT INFORMATION TO PROVIDE TRADE-AFFECTED WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE TAA PetITIONS WITH AN ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROVISION OF TAA BENEFITS AND SERVICES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY ARE TRANSPARENT TO THE TRADE-AFFECTED DISLOCATED WORKER APPLYING FOR THEM (TRADE ACT SEC. 221(A)(2)(A) AND SEC. 225; GOVERNOR-SECRETARY AGREEMENT). DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE FUNDS THAT HAVE BEEN RESERVED FOR RAPID RESPONSE TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR EVERY WORKER GROUP THAT FILES A TAA PETITION.

The state will use the information developed by the interagency data team, feedback from regional sector strategies and intelligence from economic development officials to expand layoff aversion efforts and respond to the needs of businesses before layoffs occur.

As the Department of Commerce Office of Employment and Training receives notice of potential layoffs and petition filings, the Rapid Response team organizes and establishes logistics for informational meetings for Trade impacted and non–Trade Act impacted worker groups. The Rapid Response team includes partners from IDES and Title 1B administrators from the local workforce areas, as well as other partner programs based on worker and situational needs. The Benefits, Rights and Obligations, along with Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA) and RTAA/ATAA benefits are covered at length with the affected workers. Since workers often times are not all scheduled for layoff on the same date, multiple workshops are held to provide the Trade specific information to the workers. Staff, including Title 1B, has access to updated Trade Program forms and information on Illinois workNet, and ongoing support and technical assistance from the Department of Commerce and the Department of Employment Security UI and Trade program staff.

Rapid Response Reserve funds are dedicated to layoff aversion strategies and to assist laid off workers. Layoff aversion strategies include the Talent Pipeline RFA opportunity through the Department of Commerce. The Talent Pipeline is designed to award grants for demonstration projects providing Rapid Response services to businesses and workers impacted or at risk of being impacted by company closures or layoffs. The goal of this program is to help businesses avoid layoffs where possible and help unemployed workers re–enter the workforce.
Commerce is interested in investing in projects that specifically identify employers that serve WIOA-eligible dislocated workers from layoff events; projects for recently separated veterans; projects that connect employers and WIOA eligible dislocated workers with short–term, on–the–job and customized training programs; and registered apprenticeships before or after layoff and prior to new employment. The Department will consider incumbent worker projects to assist with training existing employees who are at–risk of being laid off without the training.

Training projects must provide workers with new skills to retain their existing job or quickly transition to a new one and maintain financial stability. The value for employers is remaining competitive in the global economy and saving operational, overhead and productivity costs by training current, reliable employees rather than going through the process of replacing them. For laid off workers, Rapid Response Reserve funds offer additional assistance for outreach and recruitment, training, supportive services and in the case of large layoffs, these funds also provide assistance for transition centers to add additional support for affected workers and accommodate serving a higher volumes of individuals.
B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. IF THE STATE IS UTILIZING WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS (E.G. ON-THE-JOB TRAINING, INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING, TRANSITIONAL JOBS, AND CUSTOMIZED TRAINING) AS PART OF ITS TRAINING STRATEGY AND THESE STRATEGIES ARE NOT ALREADY DISCUSSED IN OTHER SECTIONS OF THE PLAN, DESCRIBE THE STATE’S STRATEGIES FOR HOW THESE MODELS ENSURE HIGH QUALITY TRAINING FOR BOTH THE PARTICIPANT AND THE EMPLOYER.

Work–based training is one of the highest priorities for Illinois under WIOA. The underlying advantage of work–based learning is that by definition, it incorporates skill competencies needed by the business. There is no doubt the trainees are learning the specific skills needed, and furthermore they are learning to apply skills in the way the employer prefers. This practically guarantees individuals that complete training are positioned to immediately add value in the workplace and have marketable skills to provide upward mobility in a career pathway.

Commerce has promoted a resurgence of on–the–job training going back several years using National Emergency OJT Grant (NEG). Through investing in statewide rapid response set–aside we have been working to help local areas and businesses create a positive experience through OJT and work experience. Further, using a $12 million Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) initiative, Commerce, ICCB, IDES and the Illinois Manufacturer’s Association collaborated to promote combining work–based career exploration, paid work experience/internships, transitional jobs and OJT to create a continuum of services designed to allow participants to “earn and learn” and businesses to “try before buy”. We also encouraged community colleges to collaborate with local workforce areas to create internship opportunities for eligible students before and upon graduation. This strategy is designed to ease participants and students into a paid position so they gain valuable real–world experience and the opportunity to demonstrate their essential skills to prospective employers.

WIOA was signed into law during the training cycle of our WIF project; and we strongly encouraged local areas to take advantage of the opportunity to build business relationships and pilot test work–based training under WIF to prepare them for WIOA.

Another strategy we have found helpful is to engage an industry partner that can facilitate work–based placements from the workforce system into its member businesses. The industry partner can speak the language of both worlds and “translate” between private and public sector to reduce communication breakdowns.

Illinois recognizes that one of the best ways for local areas to help key industries remain globally competitive and establish good relationships with businesses is through incumbent worker training projects. Illinois has a long history of supporting incumbent worker training at the state, regional and local levels. With the elimination of the layoff aversion requirement for local incumbent worker projects, it is anticipated that there will be a marked increase in incumbent worker activities. The state enthusiastically supports work–based training strategies including incumbent worker training projects that will make both the business and employees more competitive.
2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL INCORPORATE REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP INTO ITS STRATEGY AND SERVICES.

The use of Registered Apprenticeships will be encouraged through demonstration projects, policy guidance and technical assistance. With increased attention on various forms of work-based learning, we expect all types of apprenticeship (pre-apprenticeship, non-registered and registered) to become more common as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is implemented. Encouraging participants to simultaneously earn and learn higher technical skills through an apprenticeship will set them up to succeed in the workplace. The ultimate solution to incorporating Registered Apprenticeships into WIOA will depend on the final form of Title IB performance requirements, the planned duration of the training and the occupational demand.

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) is moving toward a comprehensive, cross-program, public-private approach to fostering the use of Registered Apprenticeships. On June 16, 2016, the IWIB created an Apprenticeship Standing Committee to recommend a plan for establishing a comprehensive and integrated apprenticeship system in Illinois, oversee its implementation and performance and recommend improvements. This 32-member body represents employers, business associations, organized labor, education, community-based organizations, philanthropies, local workforce innovation areas and the four core state agency partners.

Through its planning and implementation responsibilities, this committee will play a lead role in integrating Registered Apprenticeships throughout Illinois’ workforce development system. Five areas of activity are included in the Apprenticeship Standing Committee’s charge:

1. Describe a vision of apprenticeship in Illinois, including how apprenticeships fit in the WIOA Unified State Plan and in the context of sector-based employment and training strategies;
2. Describe the state of apprenticeship in Illinois: inventory assets (supply), assess demand by sector, and identify gaps and alignment opportunities;
3. Highlight effective practices and recommend strategies for:
   - engaging employers and industry partners;
   - assessing the viability of industry sectors to target for apprenticeships;
   - expanding access to under-represented populations including women, communities of color, opportunity youth, people with disabilities; and
   - aligning apprenticeship resources and programs across all partners;
4. Identify immediate opportunities to strengthen and expand apprenticeships; and
5. Identify state apprenticeship goals and performance metrics.

The committee’s planning efforts received a boost from the recent ApprenticeshipUSA State Accelerator Grant awarded to Illinois in June. The committee is advising the state on this planning grant, and has already made significant progress in designing a comprehensive state apprenticeship system that will expand and diversify Registered Apprenticeships in Illinois. Northern Illinois University’s Center for Governmental Studies is staffing the Illinois Apprenticeship Committee and assisting in the delivery of the State Accelerator Grant. Their involvement will help ensure swift progress and alignment among various state apprenticeship efforts.

Other activities undertaken by the Committee since it was formed include:

- Meeting with the Regional Executive Assistant from the United States Department of Labor’s (DOL) Region V Office of Apprenticeship and other Illinois Office of Apprenticeship staff to understand the requirements and process of Registered Apprenticeship;
• Researching apprenticeship models, policies and strategies of six benchmark states: Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, South Carolina, North Carolina and California; and
• Adopting the five core characteristics of DOL’s definition of Registered Apprenticeships (business involvement; structured on-the-job training; related instruction; rewards for skill gains; and a national occupational credential) as the basis for Illinois’ apprenticeship system.

At their last meeting on July 27, 2016, the Committee agreed that Illinois should apply for implementation funding available through the ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grant. They are focusing not only on the expansion of Registered Apprenticeships, but on the pipeline to Registered Apprenticeship represented by youth apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships and some types of customized employer-based training. Committee members have begun to identify activities that need to be undertaken to build a comprehensive and integrated apprenticeship system in Illinois:

• Research specific employer engagement and support practices in other states;
• Clarify the message around Registered Apprenticeship and develop an outreach and marketing campaign to demystify apprenticeship throughout Illinois;
• Focus on data collection and building the data infrastructure to support growth and expansion in Registered Apprenticeships;
• Address misperceptions and confusion surrounding apprenticeship, particularly among youth;
• Develop an apprenticeship performance framework to measure participant and employer outcomes at the local, regional and state levels through both quantitative and qualitative data;
• Integrate apprenticeships into state workforce development and economic development policy;
• Reach out to LWIAs and businesses to inform them of Illinois’ new apprenticeship system and related opportunities for assistance and support; and
• Identify other sources of support for apprenticeships to strengthen the entire apprenticeship pipeline and ensure long-term sustainability for the system.

Each of the public partners is committed to jointly integrating the policy and program recommendations into services. In addition to the efforts of the committee, Illinois has already begun incorporating policy and program enhancements to promote the use of Registered Apprenticeships. In April 2016, WIOA policy letter 15-WIOA-5.3, which pertains to the state’s Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) was issued.

The new policy allows apprenticeship programs registered with the United States Department of Labor (DOL) to bypass certain application requirements and automatically be placed on the ETPL upon notifying a local area of its interest in providing services to Title IB participants.

Additional information on how the Title IB Program is encouraging Registered Apprenticeship, unregistered apprenticeship and structured internship opportunities is posted on Illinois workNet (https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/Training/Pages/Apprenticeship.aspx).
On April 20, 2016, Illinois transmitted Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Policy 15-WIOA-5.3, which set procedures, criteria and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs. This policy is included with this plan under Attachment U at www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan. Below is a summary of the requirements of that policy.

**Criteria for Initial Eligibility**

Only eligible training providers and their eligible training programs will be included in the state’s Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The initial eligibility requirements apply to all organizations providing training services to WIOA adults and dislocated workers. Providers of on-the-job training, customized training, incumbent worker training, internships, and paid or unpaid work experience opportunities, or transitional employment will not be subject to those requirements. To be eligible to receive funds for the provision of training services, the provider must be:

- an institution of higher education that provides a program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential; this may include programs receiving approval or accreditation by the U.S. Department of Education, Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, or Illinois State Board of Education;
- an entity that carries out programs registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.) as recognized in Illinois by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Apprenticeship; or
- another public or private provider of a program of training services, which may include joint labor-management organizations; eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities under Title II if such activities are provided in combination with occupational skills training; or programs that have been recognized by the industry as meeting the standards necessary for approval or accreditation, when such standards exist.

All Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs registered with DOL, Office of Apprenticeship or a recognized state apprenticeship agency are automatically eligible to be included as an eligible training provider so long as they show interest in being added to the ETPL and the following process is completed:

- Registered Apprenticeships must indicate their interest in being included on the ETPL.
- Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs) should inform the RAs in their local area via mass email, phone call or other method of these requirements.
- An RA may contact its LWIA or State of Illinois, Office of Employment and Training to indicate its interest in being included on the ETPL.
- LWIAs must notify the Illinois Department of Commerce (Commerce), Office of Employment and Training (OET) in writing of all Registered Apprenticeship programs that have shown interest in being included on the ETPL.

**Procedure for Initial Eligibility**
Except for Registered Apprenticeships (see above), new training providers must apply for Initial Eligibility in accordance with the following guidance: Applications for Initial Eligibility of Training Providers and Training Programs. Applications for initial eligibility must be submitted according to the geographical location of the training program. A training provider is prohibited from applying for training program eligibility in LWIAs where the program site is not geographically located, unless the LWIA in which the program is located denies eligibility or fails to act on the application within 30 days of the date of application. The LWIA should instruct the training provider as to where they should apply for each training program, as follows:

- Training programs located in a single LWIA must initially apply with the LWIA where its program is geographically located.
- Training programs offered in multiple LWIAs and identical across each of the LWIAs must initially apply to the LWIA in which the training provider has identified as its headquarters and/or primary location.
- Training programs offered in multiple LWIAs - but the program is not substantially the same across the various LWIAs - must initially apply to each LWIA in which the training program is offered.
- Training programs located out-of-state or not offered at a physical location (e.g., distance learning) must initially apply to the LWIA from which it anticipates receiving the most students. A training provider is prohibited from applying for training program eligibility in LWIAs where the program site is not geographically located, unless the LWIA in which the program is located denies eligibility or fails to act on the application within 30 days of the date of application.

Information Requirements:

- Program Name (should match the name found in a course catalog for the training provider, if published);
- Program Description;
- 6-digit CIP code;
- O*Net code(s) that identifies the occupation of the eligible training program;
- Website link to additional program information;
- How many weeks it typically takes to complete the program;
- The total hours of instruction/classroom/lab time;
- Other than employment, the primary goal of the program (i.e., Associates Degree, Bachelor’s Degree, etc.);
- If Certification, License, or Registration, the name of the certifying, licensing, or registering body;
- Identify up to three occupations for which the individual will be qualified to immediately hold after completing this program;
- The program offerings;
- The entry level requirements of the program;
- The total cost of this program;
- Types of financial aid available; and
- Year the program was established.

All job seekers and program partners will have ready access to the provider list on the Illinois workNet web portal. The information provided on the list will allow local career services staff under the LWIBs and the Illinois Departments of Employment Security and Illinois Department of Human
Services Division of Rehabilitation Services to better coordinate services and allow job seekers to make better informed decisions when selecting programs of study.

**Procedure for Continuing Eligibility**

The continued eligibility policy requires that all training providers (other than Registered Apprenticeships) apply at least every two years for approval, as well as for all training programs, to remain on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Eligibility is determined based on state and local performance and eligibility criteria, and any other conditions the local board considers necessary. Timelines for applying for continued eligibility as well as approval or denial are outlined within the policy.

Below are the requirements for continued eligibility and continued inclusion on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) for training providers and programs previously approved for initial eligibility and those training providers and programs that were approved for transitional eligibility (as provided under WIOA Transition Policy Letter 7).

- LWIAs must ensure all training providers have their eligible training programs determined for continued eligibility on at least a biennial (at least every two years) basis to maintain their status as an eligible training program.
  - LWIAs may want to inform each training provider of any upcoming continued eligibility dates (i.e., a notice sent to the training provider 90 days prior to the continued eligibility date).
  - Continued eligibility is based on the date entered during the initial eligibility or most recent continued eligibility determination of the training program (as outlined in Section E.4. of this policy letter).
- The LWIA must receive the training provider’s intent to apply for continued eligibility of a training program or programs in sufficient time to meet the following continued eligibility timeline requirements.
  - The training provider expresses intent for continued eligibility of a training program by resubmitting the Training Program Basic Information application in IWDS.
- If a training program has had only changes in information that are not significant information (as outlined in Section F.2.a.), the training provider must make such changes in IWDS and save the Training Program Basic Information record.
- If a training program has had no changes in information, the training provider must still save the Training Program Basic Information record.
- Once the Training Program Basic Information record has been saved, the Initial Criteria Status record will change to “Pending Continued Eligibility (recertification)".
- The change to "Pending Continued Eligibility (recertification)" status will prompt the LWIA that they must send the training program to the LWIB for review and determination.
  - A report will be available for the local area to identify any training programs with a "Pending Continued Eligibility" status.
- The frequency of producing these reports will be a local decision.
- The LWIA should utilize due diligence in producing this report routinely throughout the year keeping in mind training programs may be jeopardized if they are not approved for continued eligibility promptly.
- The report is titled "Training Programs Nearing Continued Eligibility (recertification) Date" in IWDS.
- The LWIA should continue to make available and enroll customers in any training program with a "Pending" status.
The LWIA has 90 days to submit the application(s) to the LWIB for review and approval. The submission to the LWIB should include the following items:
  - A current copy of the Training Program Basic Information record from IWDS;
  - Identification of items that have changed since the initial eligibility or most recent continued eligibility determination;
  - Performance data (as outlined in Section J of this policy letter) for the training program; and
  - Any additional information the training provider has submitted for review or the LWIB determines pertinent to the review.

The LWIB should grant continued eligibility to a training program based on the following:
  - State and local eligibility criteria are still being met;
  - State and local performance criteria have been met;
  - One or more O*Net codes associated with the training program remain on the current Demand Occupation Training List;
  - The training provider has maintained timely updates in the Illinois Workforce Development System of information on the training program; and
  - Other conditions for which the LWIB considers necessary for continued eligibility.

The LWIB must make a determination of eligibility of the training program within 30 days of receiving the application from the LWIA.

An exception to the requirement to approve subsequent eligibility of transitionally eligible providers and programs within 30 days of application is being extended through June 30, 2016. This exception will provide up to 90 days from application date for the LWIB to determine a program eligible. This is being extended to allow local boards ample time to meet and review the applications as this policy is phased in. After June 30, 2016, this exception expires. The 90-day period shall NOT extend past June 30, 2016 as these providers and programs must receive a determination no later than June 30, 2016 or they will be removed from the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) as their transitional eligibility period expires.

LWIBs must notify the LWIA within five (5) business days of their decision to approve continued eligibility as a training program.

The LWIA must update the Training Program Basic Information record in IWDS within ten (10) business days of notification by the LWIB. The update should include the following:
  - The Status must be changed from "Pending Continued Eligibility (Recertification)" to "Accept" to indicate an accepted continued eligibility application.
  - The Program Status must be listed as "Approved".
  - The Last Eligibility/Cert. Date must be listed as the date the LWIB approved the continued eligibility, not the date the entry is made into IWDS.
  - The Next Eligibility/Cert. Date should be listed as the date for which the next continued eligibility should take place (and should take into consideration the same factors for initial eligibility as outlined in Section C.3. of this policy letter).

Training programs that are not determined eligible by the LWIB within 30 days of receipt of the application from the LWIA will be removed from the approved program list and may reapply after one year.

Training programs that are not determined eligible within 120 days of their continued eligibility date will be removed from the approved program list in IWDS. (Note: The intent of this provision is to automatically clear training programs from IWDS when they have not
been approved for continued eligibility in a timely fashion. Such programs will not be available for selection and thus are removed.)

- LWIAs shall cease to enroll customers in any training program that has been moved to the capture list. Customers who have already been enrolled in training programs that are removed from the capture list shall be allowed to complete such training programs.
- A training provider may reapply for eligibility for any training program that was not determined eligible for any reason other than “for cause” reasons.

**4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PRIORITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS, OTHER LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF WIOA SEC. 134(C)(3)(E), WHICH APPLIES TO INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES FUNDING BY THE ADULT FORMULA PROGRAM.**

All Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) inquirants are asked to identify if they are on public assistance, are low income, or are basic skills deficient. Inquirants are asked to provide documentation of earning diplomas, degrees and certificates and those without post-secondary credentials and degrees are tested for math and reading skills at intake to determine eligibility for the Adult program. Individuals that become participants in the Adult and Dislocated Worker streams have information on their income, basic skills and enrollment in other social service programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recorded and tracked in the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS). IWDS is a web-based client tracking and reporting system that serves as the central repository of data on all WIOA participants. Tracking of participants with these indicators is done routinely at the local and state level to ensure that priority of service requirements is met.

On October 29, 2015, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) issued WIOA Policy Letter 15-WIOA-4.2 and other related policy letters (see Attachment U at www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan) that outline Commerce’s WIOA Title IB general and funding stream eligibility and documentation requirements. Allowable supporting documentation is listed in the attachment to the policy letter and there are many items that can be used to support eligibility and identification for priority of service. We require the use of TABE and other tests to verify basic skills deficiency. Identifying public assistance registrants is supported by data from the Illinois Department of Human Services systems. Veteran status is documented using the DD214 form.

Commerce is in the process of updating its online monitoring instrument to reflect both state policy and the WIOA Final Rule. The updated monitoring instrument will provide for a review of general eligibility as well as priority of service based on the new requirements. In addition, the state’s monitoring instrument will verify all local areas have established written policies and procedures to ensure priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient and veterans.

Until updates to Commerce’s online monitoring instrument are completed, Commerce continues to use WIOA-specific participant file review worksheets to monitor eligibility for participants served in the WIOA Adult program. Commerce conducts on-site programmatic and fiscal monitoring of all local areas at least once annually.
5. DESCRIBE THE STATE’S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS.

The Program Year 2015 Funding Notice for the Title 1B funds provides that the local workforce areas can transfer up to fifty percent (50%) of funds between the adult and dislocated worker funding streams without approval from the state. The Department will consider requests that exceed the fifty percent (50%) transfer threshold based on local data and overall performance.
C. YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA,—

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA IN AWARDING SUCH GRANTS.*

* Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

In order to address the needs of youth in Illinois, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board created the Disadvantaged Youth Career Pathways Task Force to create a set of recommendations for how local areas should build partnerships and engage businesses for work–based learning and other initiatives, exercising any necessary WIOA program elements in pursuit of sustainable career pathways for youth throughout the state. It is anticipated that formal policy will be developed as the state reviews the Task Force recommendations and the final WIOA regulations.

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH AS DESCRIBED IN 129(A)(1)(B), INCLUDING HOW IT WILL LEVERAGE AND ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, AND COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE.

Illinois’ Unified State Plan seeks to frame recommendations for creating sustainable career pathways for youth throughout the state, with a focus on the needs of young people who are not in school and not working, a group we refer to as “Opportunity Youth.” Of the estimated 1.8 million youth ages 15-24 living in Illinois in 2013, approximately 18.3% were considered to be in poverty and 19.3% were unemployed - more than twice the rate of the entire labor force. Further, of this 15-24 year-old cohort, an estimated 33.5% were not in school or working. These opportunity youth have much higher poverty (30%) and unemployment (40.2%) rates than the general population that age.

At the state level, the Core Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners seek to leverage existing efforts such as the Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth, which is creating a strategic vision for education and health and human services by bringing together all state entities that interact with children into a central unit, and the New Skills for Youth Initiative, a national effort funding Illinois’ secondary education agency to actualize a robust plan for career pathway curriculum integration and connections to the workforce. In addition to these examples, Illinois currently has additional legislative efforts and policy initiatives that have been and will continue to be tied into the Youth Committee of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), formed as a recommendation of the IWIB Disadvantaged Youth Task Force (which met from 2015-2016).

Through the IWIB Youth Committee, Illinois has leveraged the input of the business community, the Illinois P-20 Council, Illinois Learning Exchanges, state boards, agencies and other partners to
create a set of criteria for career pathway programs that meet the needs of Illinois youth that have barriers to employment.

Illinois has secured a funding commitment from all core WIOA partners to blend together various funding streams to support business-led sector initiatives based on career pathways that fully mainstream this youth population, while pointing the way to a sustainable integration of services across agencies and partnerships. This funding, and relevant criteria, have been developed into a Request for Application that will be distributed across the WIOA partnership network by all core and partner agencies upon its review and approval by the full IWIB Youth Committee in September 2016. Technical Assistance related to the development of quality programs is being designed for deployment leading up to the release of the Request for Application (RFA).

Programs targeted by the RFA will be built on a platform of work-based learning, the development of foundational skills, continuous improvement through education and training, and sustainability - all with the support of public-sector and business partners. Ten success elements for workforce pilot programs serving opportunity youth were identified by the task force and have been included as the pillars of the RFA, as well as key activities identified towards the accomplishment of Illinois’ goals for youth activities. These elements demonstrate the principles, strategies, and criteria in the WIOA Unified State Plan and how various funding sources may be blended for full regional ownership and sustainability.

3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2) ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED.*

* Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

Illinois will maintain programmatic fidelity to WIOA youth policy through a system of robust monitoring, examination of best practices statewide and nationally, and continuous information sharing and technical assistance. Illinois’ Disadvantaged Youth Career Pathways Task Force is the first step in this process.


Illinois does not yet have a statewide policy. The Illinois Workforce Investment Board (IWIB) Youth Committee is examining the issue from a statewide policy perspective. The Illinois IWIB created the Disadvantaged Youth Task Force to use the vision of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified State Plan to frame recommendations for creating sustainable career pathways for youth throughout the state. The task force in turn created the IWIB Youth Committee to carry on its work. The committee is currently setting an agenda to examine policy issues affecting youth services in the wake of final WIOA regulations. The “Needs Additional Assistance” clauses in both In-School and Out-of-School youth eligibility will be reexamined by the committee for possible statewide policy solutions that are able to fit both our urban and rural dynamics, while leaving the flexibility needed for
local areas to design effective local programming. This item presents an opportunity for each of the core partners to help create a cross-program policy definition that will allow their local staff to have consistent definitions. This coordinated policy could be codified through a joint issuance (the preferred method), or could be adopted as policy by each of the core partners. Regardless of the mechanism for issuance, the state partners for Title IB, Title II, Title III and Title IV are committed to improving service delivery through adoption of common policies.


Illinois State law does not define “not attending school” or “attending school”. We continue to work with education entities in the state to create a working definition. For the time being we place emphasis on the term “School”, which under the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5) is defined as “School – “The terms "common schools", "free schools" and "public schools" are used interchangeably to apply to any school operated by authority of this Act.”

The Illinois School Records Act (105 ILCS 10/2) defines as: "School" means any public preschool, day care center, kindergarten, nursery, elementary or secondary educational institution, vocational school, special educational facility or any other elementary or secondary educational agency or institution and any person, agency or institution which maintains school student records from more than one school, but does not include a private or non–public school.

The Illinois State Board of Education states that “A non–public school is "any non–profit, non–home–based, and non–public elementary or secondary school that is in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and attendance at which satisfies the requirements” of 105 ILCS 5/26–1 of the Code.”

6. IF NOT USING THE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INCLUDE THE SPECIFIC STATE DEFINITION.

With the issuance of WIOA Policy 15–WIOA–4.4 Youth Eligibility, we reference the Basic Skills Deficient definition found in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act which is:

The term “basic skills deficient” means, with respect to an individual— (A) who is a youth, that the individual has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or (B) who is a youth or adult, that the individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society.
D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must also include:

1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)

2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)

3. THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING AN IDENTIFICATION OF SUCCESSFUL PROVIDERS OF SUCH ACTIVITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)
E. WAIVER REQUESTS (OPTIONAL)

States wanting to request waivers as part of their Title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

1. IDENTIFIES THE STATUTORY OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR WHICH A WAIVER IS REQUESTED AND THE GOALS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, INTENDS TO ACHIEVE AS A RESULT OF THE WAIVER AND HOW THOSE GOALS RELATE TO THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

2. DESCRIBES THE ACTIONS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, HAS UNDERTAKEN TO REMOVE STATE OR LOCAL STATUTORY OR REGULATORY BARRIERS;

3. DESCRIBES THE GOALS OF THE WAIVER AND THE EXPECTED PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES IF THE REQUEST IS GRANTED;

4. DESCRIBES HOW THE WAIVER WILL ALIGN WITH THE DEPARTMENT’S POLICY PRIORITIES, SUCH AS:
   A. SUPPORTING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT;
   B. CONNECTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGIES;
   C. SUPPORTING WORK-BASED LEARNING;
   D. IMPROVING JOB AND CAREER RESULTS, AND
   E. OTHER GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

5. DESCRIBES THE INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER, INCLUDING HOW THE WAIVER WILL IMPACT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT; AND

6. DESCRIBES THE PROCESS USED TO:
   A. MONITOR THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE WAIVER;
   B. PROVIDE NOTICE TO ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER;
   C. PROVIDE ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE REQUEST;
   D. ENSURE MEANINGFUL PUBLIC COMMENT, INCLUDING COMMENT BY BUSINESS AND ORGANIZED LABOR, ON THE WAIVER.
   E. COLLECT AND REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT WAIVER OUTCOMES IN THE STATE’S WIOA ANNUAL REPORT

The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver;
The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;  Yes

2. The state has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;  Yes

3. The state established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members.  Yes

4. The state established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2).  Yes

5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership.  No

6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the state consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the state in determining the distributions.  Yes

7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7).  Yes

8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan.  Yes

9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers state laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I.  Yes

10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.  Yes

11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);  Yes
All program-specific requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.
A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

In an effort to provide high quality services to both job seekers and employers, professional development training sessions will be provided to Employment Service staff as it relates to workshop presentations, public speaking, resume writing and critiquing, interview skills, networking, and use of social media for job seeking and outreach purposes. In an effort to maintain these skills, refresher training sessions will be provided to staff performing employment services. In addition, state-sponsored professional development opportunities via the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Commerce) and Department of Human Services (DHS) are also made available to Employment Service staff.

2. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM, AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRAL TO UI STAFF FOR ADJUDICATION.

The strategies that will be developed to support training and awareness across core program partners will be a collaborative effort. This collaboration among the core and required partners will include providing training and general knowledge of each core and required program related to services offered in the comprehensive one-stop centers. Effective methods of communication will be established to provide all staff with updates to programs and services offered by the core and required partners. Employment Service staff is currently trained to identify UI eligibility issues and refer those issues to UI staff for adjudication when required. Training the Employment Services staff on identifying UI issues and the referral process has been provided in person, and the training modules are maintained and accessible on the agency’s internal website. Similar methods of training will be provided for other required partners under WIOA, including through live and pre-recorded webinars, job aids, and in-person training sessions as needed.
Meaningful assistance to individuals requesting guidance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through the comprehensive one–stop center will be provided by the Employment Service staff located in the one–stop center. These staff members will have existing knowledge of the UI program and claim–filing process. Direct linkage consisting of on–demand, real time access to additional agency staff will also be available to assist in the UI claim–filing process. Information about the UI program will be provided by the staff and supplemented via brochures (or other forms of written communication), in addition to messaging on a common system that will be utilized by all core program partners.
C. DESCRIBE THE STATE’S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS.

Strategies that will be utilized to provide reemployment assistance will include requiring UI claimants to register with the employment service system as an eligibility requirement; referring individuals to meet with an Employment Service staff member to register with the employment system immediately after filing a UI claim in–person; conducting reemployment workshops for profiled individuals and other targeted populations in collaboration with our local partners; providing individual assistance to develop reemployment plans; increasing and improving messaging/communications related to employment services opportunities when individuals file claims via the website or call center; matching qualified job seekers with employers’ recruiting needs; utilizing electronic notification of available job openings; and making referrals for training or retraining on in–demand skills. Individuals who file UI claims in–person will be referred to an Employment Service staff member.
D. Describe how the state will use W-P funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between W-P and UI, as appropriate, including the following:

1. Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;

Coordination between Wagner–Peyser and Unemployment Insurance programs will begin with the requirement of all UI claimants to register with the employment services system to fulfill the UI eligibility requirement. As a result of the UI claimant being registered in the employment services system, the employment services staff will be able to target this population and provide labor exchange services by requesting the claimant to report in–person to conduct reemployment assessments for job placement and training needs. Contacts to claimants will be made via phone notification systems, e–mail blasts and/or mass mailings.

2. Registration of UI claimants with the state’s employment service if required by state law;

Section 500A of the Illinois Unemployment Insurance Act states: An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any week only if the Director finds that: He [or she] has registered for work at and thereafter has continued to report at an employment office in accordance with such regulations as the Director may prescribe, except that the Director may, by regulation, waive or alter either or both of the requirements of this subsection as to individuals attached to regular jobs, and as to such other types of cases or situations with respect to which he [or she] finds that compliance with such requirements would be oppressive or inconsistent with the purposes of this Act, provided that no such regulation shall conflict with Section 400 of this Act. A process will be established in which an eligibility issue will automatically be created after a designated amount of time for those individuals who fail to fully register with employment services after filing an initial claim for benefits.

3. Administration of the work test for the state unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and

UI claimants who are determined eligible for benefits will be referred to employment services upon completion of filing an Unemployment claim. The population of UI claimants that is identified through the profiling program will be required to participate in the reemployment workshop. Failure to report to the workshop and participate as required will be documented in the employment service system, which will trigger the posting of an adjudication issue in the UI benefits system. If an eligibility issue arises while providing employment services, the case will be referred to the UI staff for immediate resolution, resolved by the employment service staff member, or posted and scheduled for resolution on a different date and time.
4. PROVISION OF REFERRALS TO AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.

Wagner-Peyser staff at the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) is charged with increasing community awareness about education, workforce and economic development programs through in-person and outreach services such as job fairs, community events, onsite recruitments, resource linkage and presentations.

Individuals that may require additional assistance with his/her reemployment efforts may be identified through various means including the UI profiling program; in-person contact at a Comprehensive One-Stop location; contact by phone; or through an automated self-assessment process for UI claimants that is currently being developed. The self-assessment process will allow for individuals to complete a series of questions related to his/her efforts to obtain employment. The response to each question will be associated with a specific score. Upon completing the assessment, a total score will be provided, which will prompt the system to recommend various employment service options including referrals to training or literacy programs; presenting for a re-employment workshop; or participating in one of the online employment related tutorials.

It is through these methods that the targeted individuals will participate in the development of an Individual Reemployment Plan, with the assistance from Wagner-Peyser staff. The development of an Individual Reemployment Plan will assist to identify the existence of any barriers to obtaining and maintaining meaningful employment. The barriers identified in the plan will be the bases in which the individual is referred to additional services that will assist with reemployment efforts including, but not limited to, workshops that focus on specific employment needs, job training, adult education or literacy programs, trade assistance, veteran outreach services, youth services, career pathways or vocational rehabilitation services.
1. ASSESSMENT OF NEED

Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

IDES’ four year AOP will run from 2016 through 2019 as required by 20 CFR Subpart B. 653.107. In PY 16, IDES will provide Wagner-Peyser services to migrant workers and employers of migrant seasonal farm workers (MSFW). Illinois will ensure the full range of employment, training and educational services are available and equivalent services provided to non-MSFW’s in compliance with WIOA sections 102 as a lead agency with unified partners in implementation for the vision and goals agreed upon with workforce development activities. The MSFW program will continue efforts to strengthen its working relationships with MSFWs and employers so that each better understands how IllinoisJobLink Illinois’s internet-based Labor Exchange System, can be of assistance to both by delivering the full range of Labor Exchange services via an outreach program designed to locate, contact and inform migrant and seasonal farmworkers about the rights and services available to them.

The agency will ensure that MSFWs are offered the same range of employment services, benefits and protections that are provided to non-MSFWs including information on jobs, registration assistance, referral to a qualified job, vocational counseling, testing and job training referral services. To ensure statewide compliance, the agency will make every effort to meet the Equity Indicators of Compliance as well as the Minimum Service Level Indicators.

**Agricultural Activity and Projections**

A 2015 study of agriculture in Illinois showed agriculture is a critical component of Illinois’ overall economic well-being, contributing about $120.9 billion of total economic output — more than several other Illinois industries, including the financial, transportation and construction industries.

The study, commissioned by the Illinois Livestock Development Group (ILDG) with cooperation from Illinois Corn Marketing Board (ICMB), Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB), and Illinois Soybean Association (ISA), was conducted by Decision Innovation Solutions (DIS) of Urbandale, Iowa. The analysis is based on a combination of datasets from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) 2012 Census of Agriculture and the IMPLAN modeling system. http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/

The report showed farming provides the base for a variety of agriculture industries, including food processing and the manufacture of farm machinery, chemicals and fertilizer. Taking those jobs into account means that in 2012, production agriculture and ag-related industries accounted for 432,831 jobs, or about 1 in every 17 jobs in Illinois. Crop farming is a significant part of agriculture’s economic contribution. Statewide output attributed to crop production and further processing is more than $56.7 billion and is responsible for 197,353 jobs.
24 of Illinois’ counties derive at least one third of their total output from agriculture and agriculture-related industries.

12 of Illinois’ counties derive at least one fifth of their total jobs from agriculture and agriculture-related industries.

Illinois Agriculture According to the USDA/NASS State Overview, Illinois is currently ranked the 2 state in the nation for:

- Corn for grain
- Soybeans for beans
- Value of Sales by Commodity Group ($1000): grains, oilseeds, dry beans, dry peas

Illinois is also ranked in the top five states for:

- Market Value of Agriculture Products Sold: Crops, including nursery and greenhouse
- Hogs and Pigs Sold
- Hogs and Pigs Inventory

These rankings demonstrate the importance of Illinois agriculture to help feed, clothe, and fuel those beyond Illinois and U.S. borders.

According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, there were 75,087 farms in Illinois. This was a decrease from 76,860 farms in 2007. The average size of an Illinois farm in 2012 was 359 acres, which was 11 acres more than an average Illinois farm in 2007.

Advancements in technology at both the farm and agribusiness levels have led to a steady decline in the share of employment devoted to the production and conversion of commodities grown in the State of Illinois. However, while the share of employment directly related to agriculture has decreased over time, the value of agriculture continues to increase, illustrating a long-standing continuous change in the structure of Illinois agriculture. http://www.decision-innovation.com/economic-impact/case-study--Illinois-agricultural-economic-contribution/

Corn and soybeans dominate Illinois production of primary agricultural commodities. Because of Illinois' large share of the nation’s totals in these categories, what happens in Illinois regarding production and yield from year to year can have implications for the nation as a whole.

**Major Crop Activity**

Seed and Grain companies; hog farms; Pumpkin and horseradish farms are the primary industries for employment needs. Other industries with smaller workforce remain in fruit and vegetable farms. While Illinois is considered a seasonal state, crop activity begins in April and ends in early December.

The University of Illinois Extension Service; Summary of Illinois Specialty Growers Association reports the following schedule of crops and seasons for Illinois:
http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state/agriculture/index.php

Asparagus (April to June) Strawberries (Late May to Early June) Apricots and Cherries (June to July) Blueberries (June to August) Beans, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cauliflower and Peas (June to
October) Fresh Herbs (June to October) Raspberries (June to November) Summer Apples, Blackberries, Peaches, Nectarines (July to August) Beets, Corn, Cucumbers, Pickles & Plums (July to September) Peppers and Tomatoes (July to October) Thorn less Blackberries (August) Grapes, Muskmelons and Watermelons (August and September) Eggplants and Greens (August and November) Turnips (September to November) Fall Winter Apples (September to November) Pumpkins, Squash and Gourds (November to December)

A. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE MEANS: 1) IDENTIFYING THE TOP FIVE LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS, THE MONTHS OF HEAVY ACTIVITY, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF PRIME ACTIVITY; 2) SUMMARIZE THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS’ NEEDS IN THE STATE (I.E. ARE THEY PREDOMINANTLY HIRING LOCAL OR FOREIGN WORKERS, ARE THEY EXPRESSING THAT THERE IS A SCARCITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE); AND 3) IDENTIFYING ANY ECONOMIC, NATURAL, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE OR ANY PROJECTED FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE.

According to USDA NASS apples, peaches, pumpkins, sweet corn and green beans are Illinois’ top five labor-intensive crops.
http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_1_State_Level/Illi nois/st17_1_038_038.pdf

2) Summarize the agricultural employers’ needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and


Overcoming entrenched challenges A rising global population, evolving diets, increasing incidence of diet-related diseases, and climate change which threatens to disrupt the global and local food supply chains—will continue to add stress on Illinois’ natural resources and its food and agriculture system. The state’s mature infrastructure has been hampered by underinvestment and poor coordination, which threatens to restrict the flow of Illinois’ food and agriculture products to market. And the low visibility of Illinois’ food and agriculture sector is a major obstacle to expansion in existing and new markets, both at home and abroad.

Illinois to succeed in the years ahead, several barriers must be recognized and removed. A lack of coordination in the food and agriculture system, particularly between Chicago and statewide food and agriculture interests, impedes the state’s ability to unlock the full potential of its assets. The state’s current business climate and an absence of policies to promote qualified individuals with companies looking to hire. Several workforce development assets exist, but coordination is key. The state should raise awareness of employment opportunities in the food and agriculture system and increase the availability of education and training programs. Illinois Pathways, for instance, includes information on courses and careers in food, agriculture, and natural resources.

The state should also make a more concerted effort to support programs that engage nontraditional farmers—including women, refugees, veterans, the formerly incarcerated, and early- to mid-career professionals seeking occupation changes—in food and agriculture professional development and training activities. Community colleges across the state, including in Lake and McHenry counties, administer programs that have proved effective in helping these groups find meaningful work in a
sector that sorely needs them. Independent organizations such as Growing Home, located in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago, also offer a model for helping individuals with employment barriers develop the skills they need to pursue careers across the food and agriculture system, from urban growing facilities to wholesalers to restaurants.

While much of the agriculture workforce resides in the United States, the demand for labor exceeds supply, and immigrants are important contributors to this workforce. Food and agriculture jobs in Illinois offer immigrants significant economic opportunities—yet the current H–2A visa system is inadequate and unreliable, hindering crop and livestock farmers in their efforts to find, retain, and maintain an adequate, legal, and cost-competitive labor supply. Immigration reform that streamlines the visa application system and workers’ ability to secure multiyear visas would help farmers secure adequate labor during harvest and throughout the season while providing greater security to immigrant workers. To prevent exploitation of migrant and other farm workers, it is essential that federal and state authorities commit to strong enforcement of wage, safety, and health regulations.

Farm Labor Contractors (FLC) who recruit and employ farmworkers are targeted for employer services along with compliance of state and federal regulations. There are 38 FLC’s in Illinois known to have recruited and employed farm labor. Approximately 900 migrants were employed by FLC’S in 2015, in addition to approximately 300 direct hires by Ag employers.

IDES anticipates that the number of migrants hired by FLC’s will remain consistent with prior years in areas where staff provided outreach. Outreach staff will be assigned to areas with the collaboration of the IMC NFJP who assisted 6,000+ migrants in their PY14 year.

Local offices that have MSFW activity in their service areas are required to operate an Outreach Program to contact agricultural and food processing employers and offer labor recruitment assistance via Illinois Job Link (IJL) or the Agricultural Recruiting System (ARS).

B. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS MEANS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWs IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION.

IMC NFJP field staff projected that there will be 20,800 migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the next program year. It is expected that the numbers of migrant farmworkers will be declining in the next few years; more H2A workers are being used by Illinois growers. Generally, the age distribution is projected to be: 15% under 21, 59% including ages 22–44, 20% including ages 45–54, and 6% over 55. Male is 71% and female 29%. More than 75% have not finished high school. The majority of Illinois farmworkers speak Spanish and have Hispanic/Latino roots primarily from Florida, Texas, California and Mexico. Growing are seasonal farmworkers from other racial and ethnic groups. Non U.S. Countries and Languages Central American countries (including Guatemala) with various
languages, e.g. Spanish, Indian dialect (quiché, mam) Guatemala – Spanish (see above) Haiti–Creole, Spanish, English Mexico – Spanish West African countries with several languages High Season – approximate statewide % /varies by regional area 60% Migrant 40% Seasonal Low Season – approximate statewide % /varies by regional area 20% Migrant 80% Seasonal To IMC’s knowledge “year round farmworkers” would be farmhands so we do not have information about them.

3) Identifying any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State.

Adding to the complex, fluid environment, climate change threatens to disrupt the global and local food supply chains. All of these factors will contribute to a dramatic and sustained increase of agricultural exports of all kinds—including commodities and processed foods—to global markets. http://farmillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/FARM-IL-Report-2015_FULL_vF3.pdf Executive Summary
2. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

A. CONTACTING FARMWORKERS WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED BY THE NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES.

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) will conduct outreach services to farmworkers through designated agency outreach staff stationed in four high volume offices. To assist with outreach efforts, Employment Security is currently hiring up to six bi-lingual individuals in these high volume offices to assist Spanish-speaking consumers. Other public and private community service agencies and migrant and seasonal farm worker groups will also provide outreach services in cooperation with Employment Security. Employment Security will continue to identify pertinent groups, organizations and associations involved with the agricultural community to establish new alliances, such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee, the Illinois Migrant Council (IMC NFJP), Illinois Farm Bureau, Legal Aid Foundation, Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), Community Health Partnership and faith-based organizations. We will discuss ways to reach Agriculture employers and inform them of Employment Security employer services, the Agricultural Recruitment Service (ARS) and the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW) employment service complaint system through Employment Security's Business Services Team. These event presentations, workshops and other communication means supported by updated technical advancements, will be utilized whenever and wherever possible.

Other activities to assist with contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by normal intake activities conducted by employment service offices include:

- The development of increased literature and media outreach targeted to the agricultural community through an MSFW informational packet for workers and employers summarizing available resources. The IllinoisJobLink.com database systems allows for a variety of language options.
- Strengthening of relationships with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), U.S. Department of Justice, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Health & Human Services, as they relate to MSFWs and other agricultural workers.
- Establishment of networks and structured communication with these groups, organizations and associations to help to identify ongoing needs and services. Additionally, meetings to realize a joint effort with others to locate and assist MSFWs will be attended within the limits of available resources.
- The establishment of a more visible MSFW State Monitor Advocate internet presence, through the development of a new website titled Agricultural Employers, Outreach, Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Program, Foreign Labor: H-2A & H-2B. In addition to the basic role, items such as agricultural related materials for the worker and employer, links and location of centers and agency/community resources, complaint process, safety and other informational items are now displayed in one convenient location.
• Providing more extensive training to Employment Security and partner staffs in One-Stops to better identify MSFWs, their needs and service requirements, and providing informational material to those MSFWs, employers and organizations in their counties served.

• Target community based business and events in MSFW communities (i.e. shopping center, Wal-Marts, laundromats, churches, restaurants, etc.) to reach MSFWs with informational materials.

B. PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OUTREACH WORKERS. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MUST INCLUDE TRAININGS, CONFERENCES, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, AND INCREASED COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ON TOPICS SUCH AS ONE-STOP CENTER SERVICES (I.E. AVAILABILITY OF REFERRALS TO TRAINING, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES, AND CAREER SERVICES, AS WELL AS SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES), THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM, INFORMATION ON THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SERVING MSFWS IN THE AREA, AND A BASIC SUMMARY OF FARMWORKER RIGHTS, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

The WIOA coalescing of many state and federal agencies into one location will allow for all migrant organizations including agricultural employers the opportunity to train those governmental agencies of all which is provided for farmworkers; referrals to training, farmworker rights, employment contracts, career services, health care, and the employment service complaint system to name a few. This opportunity will simultaneously allow all migrant organizations the opportunity to be trained on all the governmental services offered at One–Stops; Unemployment Insurance and UI eligibility issues, TANF, SNAP and Career Pathways to name a few. The scheduling of these training opportunities will exist and be planned for pre and post season.

IDES will continue to build relationships with organizations that provide services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers such as the WIOA 167 NFJP grantee the Illinois Migrant Council (IMC NFJP), Illinois Farm Bureau, Legal Aid Foundation, Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), Community Health Partnership and faith–based organizations to name a few. We will discuss ways to reach Ag employers and inform them of IDES employer services, the Agricultural Recruitment Service (ARS) and the MSFW employment service complaint system. through IDES’ Business Services Team. The Business Services Team will be describing the positive results the Agricultural Recruitment System has brought Ag employers in an effort to increase its publicity. These event presentations, workshops and other communication means supported by updated technical advancements as they occur will be utilized when possible.

C. INCREASING OUTREACH WORKER TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS INCLUDING THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES.

The WIOA coalescing of many state and federal agencies into one location will allow for all migrant organizations including agricultural employers the opportunity to train those governmental agencies of all which is provided for farmworkers; referrals to training, farmworker rights, employment contracts, career services, health care, and the employment service complaint system to name a few.
This opportunity will simultaneously allow all migrant organizations the opportunity to be trained on all the governmental services offered at One–Stops; Unemployment Insurance and UI eligibility issues, TANF, SNAP and Career Pathways to name a few. The scheduling of these training opportunities will exist and be planned for pre and post season.

D. PROVIDING STATE MERIT STAFF OUTREACH WORKERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THEY ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

Planned is an annual statewide joint program training and coordination session for staff from the MSFW Program and IMC NFJP near the beginning of the agricultural season in Illinois. The agenda will cover updated staff contact information; guidelines for mutual referrals of farmworkers; and cross training about programmatic updates, farmworker eligibility, and identification of potential participants using the Illinois Job Link data system. Another statewide session may be conducted if needed to further align both programs after the final Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations are issued.

E. COORDINATING OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH NFJP GRANTEES AS WELL AS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES AND MSFW GROUPS.

IDES will continue to build relationships with organizations that provide services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers such as the WIOA 167 NFJP grantee the Illinois Migrant Council (IMC NFJP), Illinois Farm Bureau, Legal Aid Foundation, Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), Community Health Partnership and faith–based organizations to name a few. We will discuss ways to reach Ag employers and inform them of IDES employer services, the Agricultural Recruitment Service (ARS) and the MSFW employment service complaint system, through IDES' Business Services Team. The Business Services Team will be describing the positive results the Agricultural Recruitment System has brought Ag employers in an effort to increase its publicity. These event presentations, workshops and other communication means supported by updated technical advancements as they occur will be utilized when possible.

Illinois Association of Agencies and Community Organizations for Migrant Advocacy (IAACOMA): IDES and IAACOMA met to discuss the upcoming growing season, to inform the AOP and address any concerns held by either organization. IDES agreed to offer participation in IAACOMA’s upcoming conference in May 2016. IDES seeks to have staff and invite community members, employers, service providers and farmworkers to join us at the conference. These individuals will be those who normally would not attend or know of the IAACOMA goals to create change by educating community members on MSFW issues. Agenda’s typically include Migrant Housing; Health Issues; Education needs; Safety in the Fields/Chemical exposure; and policy reform. Participating organizations include: IL Dept. of Public Health, OSHA Wage and Hour, Community Health Partners, Legal Assistance Foundation, Housing Action of Illinois, schools and employer staff are present. IDES staff has presented at IAACOMA’s workshops and currently has one IAACOMA board member.
3. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM.

Describe the State agency’s proposed strategies for:

(A) PROVIDING THE FULL RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY, BOTH FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS, THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS INCLUDES:

I. HOW CAREER AND TRAINING SERVICES REQUIRED UNDER WIOA TITLE I WILL BE PROVIDED TO MSFWs THROUGH THE ONE-STOP CENTERS;
II. HOW THE STATE SERVES AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH SERVICES.

The WIOA coalescing of many state and federal agencies into one location will allow for all migrant organizations including agricultural employers the opportunity to train those governmental agencies of all which is provided for farmworkers; referrals to training, farmworker rights, employment contracts, career services, health care, and the employment service complaint system to name a few. This opportunity will simultaneously allow all migrant organizations the opportunity to be trained on all the governmental services offered at One-Stops; Unemployment Insurance and UI eligibility issues, TANF, SNAP and Career Pathways to name a few. The scheduling of these training opportunities will exist and be planned for pre and post season.

IDES will ensure that MSFWs are offered the same range of employment services, benefits and protections as those provided to non-MSFWs at all One-Stops. Staff assisted services for job referral include:

- Assisting job seekers in completing full, quality registrations and resumes in IllinoisJobLink.com
- Provide technical assistance through IDES Outreach staff, including trainings, conferences, comprehensive Q&A workshops, supportive services and career services as well as specific employment opportunities.
- Collaboration with other organizations and the services each one of them provides
- Provide training on our labor exchange service, IllinoisJobLink.com (IJL), and improve job matches by identifying job preferences and complete work history.
- Provide a basic summary of Farmworkers Rights.
- Provide Spanish and English speaking personnel to assist in awareness across core programs including Unemployment Insurance (UI) and identification of UI eligibility issues as well as assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation.
- Providing employer outreach workers and local office job seeker staff with professional development training to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both employers and job seekers.
- Providing outreach efforts with NFJP grantees (IMC) as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.
IMC and IDES plan to increase outreach to improve comprehensive supportive services to MSFW families. This collaboration will require updating an effective referral process, additional training for the IMC frontline staff on IllinoisJobLink.com and its job-seeker and employer user guides and improving communication amongst staff at all levels.

Distribution of bi-lingual flyers and brochures will continue and when feasible they will be mailed directly to MSFW’s. While service providers participate in distributing IDES materials, the highest distribution is at MSFW events. In PY 15 IDES staff participated in 68 MSFW events and we anticipate this number increasing in PY 16.

Currently, Champaign and Peoria local offices are designated by USDOL as Illinois’ MSFW significant offices. A comprehensive level of MSFW services will be provided at all WIOA One-Stops including but not limited to, access to information about workplace safety and rights, career guidance and referrals to training opportunities.

**Referrals to Supportive Services**

Outreach staff will make referrals to service providers year round as this is not a seasonal activity. The IMC is a primary referral source of MSFW NFJP training programs. IDES staff coordinates with IMC’s Health and Safety educational programs. Presentations about heat stress prevention and pesticide safety are given by IMC staff in conjunction with IDES outreach staff when feasible. Based on the availability at the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), IMC assists migrant farmworkers in completing food stamp applications through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Outreach and Referral Program.

**Monitor Advocate Services**

A full-time State Monitor Advocate (SMA) (temporarily vacant) provides “qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate” to the services provided to other Illinois jobseekers. Essentially MSFWs should receive all workforce development services, benefits and protections on an equitable and non-discriminatory basis, including guidance, testing, job development, training and referral. The SMA:

- Ensures equitable services for farmworkers
- Manages the Employment Service and Employment related Law Complaint System
- Implements and sustains farmworker outreach
- Provides farmworkers notification of available employment services and workers’ rights
- Facilitates the Agricultural Job Order Clearance Process Sustaining the Monitor Advocate System, ensuring services provided are in accordance with WIOA Required State Core Partners for Wagner-Peyser, including the MSFW Program
- Under WIOA, aligns MSFW eligibility criteria and services with the NFJP
- Consults with various divisions of the agency to ensure accurate reporting of MSFW data.
- Prepares and implements operating instructions including Policy and Procedures relating to MSFWs
- Prepares for and participates in Federal reviews
- Prepares and updates AOP annually as required
- Identifies statewide opportunities for recruitment of MSFW
- Monitors and reports on the Employment Complaint System, processes MSFW complaints as needed
- Participates at membership organizations, which serve the Ag community
• Maintains communication with Outreach staff and management and addresses issues as they arise
• Serves as Advocate to improve services for MSFWs within the employment service system
• Manages the timeliness of field checks, housing inspections, employer visits and complaint processes
• Meets with farmworker groups and employers to promote the use of Employment Service.
• Conducts field visits to working and living locations of MSFWs.
• Collaborates with WIOA NFJP grantee staff and participates in sponsored events.

Wagner-Peyser Act Services Provided to MSFWs

• Employment information on IllinoisJobLink.com
• IJL Multilingual options
• Referral to Job Openings
• Job Seeker Skills and Resume Preparation
• Filing any and all complaints
• Job Development
• Assessment Interview
• Referrals to Supportive Services and Staff Assisted Services
• Information on Employment and Training Opportunities
• Labor Market Information
• WOTC Tax Credit Program information and certification of eligible applicants.
• Bi-lingual Spanish Speaking staff and Limited English Proficiency Service
• Information on the Employment Service Complaint System
• Trained Complaint Specialists
• Re Employment Service Program (RESP, ex-offenders services)
• Career Guidance
• Job Fairs

ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.

Outreach staff will continue to monitor FLC’s licensing coordinating with the Illinois Department of Labor for their expertise and support on FLC registration with the state. We anticipate agricultural employer registrations will increase in PY 16 with the added support of Business Services Team. The Business Services Team works directly with employers and employer organizations such as local chambers of commerce to inform employers of IDES employer services. The Business Services Team will assist with registering agricultural employers and entering their staff assisted or self-serve job orders.

Wagner-Peyser Act Services Provided to Agricultural Employers

• Agricultural Recruitment System (Local, Intrastate, Interstate)
• Housing Inspections
• Information and assistance on the Foreign Labor Certification process
• Farm Labor Contractor applications and information
• IllinoisJobLink.com self-serve or staff assisted job orders and recruitment
• Information and Referral to agencies offering programs or services benefiting the business community
• WOTC Tax Credit Program information and certification of applicants
• Informational Meetings Unemployment Insurance, Wage/Hour, Migrant Law, Worker’s Compensation, OSHA and Migrant Camp licensing, etc.
• Labor Market Information
• Job Fairs
• Local offices offer Conference room for recruitment purposes
• Field Checks and Visits
• Participate at New Employee Orientation meetings

(B) MARKETING THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM TO FARMWORKERS AND OTHER FARMWORKER ADVOCACY GROUPS.

IDES will continue to build relationships with organizations that provide services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers such as the WIOA 167 NFJP grantee the Illinois Migrant Council (IMC NFJP), Illinois Farm Bureau, Legal Aid Foundation, Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), Community Health Partnership and faith–based organizations to name a few. We will discuss ways to reach Ag employers and inform them of IDES employer services, the Agricultural Recruitment Service (ARS) and the MSFW employment service complaint system. through IDES’ Business Services Team. The Business Services Team will be describing the positive results the Agricultural Recruitment System has brought Ag employers in an effort to increase its publicity. These event presentations, workshops and other communication means supported by updated technical advancements as they occur will be utilized when possible.

(C) MARKETING THE AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEM TO AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH PUBLICITY.

A goal for PY 16 is for IDES to strengthen employer relationships by increasing employer outreach targeting top Ag employers based on the number of hired employees. Outreach staff will train and encourage the use of the Agricultural Recruitment System and IllinoisJobLink.com to recruit and post job openings. In addition, employers will be advised on staff assisted services offered such as on–site hiring and recruiting events that include local training providers and workforce partners.

An increase in self–service registrations is highly feasible through the use of IllinoisJobLink.com. IllinoisJobLink.com employs a translator for multiple languages including Spanish. While Spanish Self–Service User Guides are available the most common method of completing registrations and enrollments is through staff assisted services. We seek to dramatically increase registrations in the field using our laptops and air–cards to cut down on paperwork and data entry.

A completed IllinoisJobLink.com account offers clients a personalized home page where MSFWs are able to manage a job search, create or upload a résumé, and maintain his/her job seeker profile. Key words are used to search jobs and the job orders allow for self–referrals. Outreach staff assists in job referrals, follow–up and job readiness.

Monitoring staff activity is also an easier task through IllinoisJobLink.com as we are able to review MIC, 9002A, and many other data reports daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly. Data is available by user, local office, regionally and statewide.
4. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

(A) COLLABORATION

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

As in previous years, IMC NFJP outreach and recruitment activities will be coordinated with IDES’s Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) Program at the local level. Generally, IMC NFJP field staff and IDES MSFW staff meet informally pre–season to prepare for the arrival and locations of migrant farmworkers; prepare outreach activities for the duration of the migration and agricultural season, review expected employment and supportive needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers, and identify available resources to meet their needs. Staff may schedule tentative dates to coordinate outreach activities. IMC NFJP and MSFW Program staff also coordinated with staff of other local entities that provide a range of services for farmworkers in need.

Planned is an annual statewide joint program training and coordination session for staff from the MSFW Program and IMC NFJP near the beginning of the agricultural season in Illinois. The agenda will cover updated staff contact information; guidelines for mutual referrals of farmworkers; and cross training about programmatic updates, farmworker eligibility, and identification of potential participants using the Illinois Job Link data system. Another statewide session may be conducted if needed to further align both programs after the final Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations are issued.

To date, IDES and IMC representatives have and are conducting discussions about alignment of the WIOA Title III MSFW Program and the WIOA Title I–D NFJP activities and coordination between the two programs. They also collaborated on a presentation about the two programs given at the State Regional Planning Summit held February 23–24, 2016 which was prepared for a wide range of Illinois Local Workforce Innovation Area representatives, partners and stakeholders.

In addition to coordinating with the MSFW Program in areas where it operates, the NFJP will also partner with the one–stop service delivery system. NFJP will develop Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIA) to include a career services matrix that ensures that customers, including migrant and seasonal farmworkers, will be served under WIOA.

PY 15 outreach activities were conducted to contact potential MSFW job seekers through participation in other MSFW service provider events, as well as throughout the travels for H2A housing inspections.

IDES will continue to build relationships with organizations that provide services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers such as the WIOA 167 NFJP grantee the Illinois Migrant Council (IMC NFJP), Illinois Farm Bureau, Legal Aid Foundation, Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), Community Health Partnership and faith–based organizations to name a few. We will discuss ways to reach Ag employers and inform them of IDES employer services, the Agricultural Recruitment Service (ARS) and the MSFW employment service complaint system. through IDES’ Business Services Team. The Business Services Team will be describing the positive results the Agricultural Recruitment System has brought Ag employers in an effort to increase its publicity.
These event presentations, workshops and other communication means supported by updated technical advancements as they occur will be utilized when possible.

(B) REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT.

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

The Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) went out for public comment (as a component of the Unified State Plan) for the period of January 25, 2016-February 24, 2016. The plan also was presented to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) via a webinar on February 10, 2016 and at the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) meeting on February 25, 2016. The IWIB includes NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other organizations. The content of the agricultural outreach plan was discussed at the February 25 IWIB meeting and recommendations were made. The AOP was modified and changes including comments and editing are incorporated into this draft with the assistance of the Illinois Migrant Council, the NFJP grantee, and the only organization to provide comment. Eloy Salazar, Executive Director of the Illinois Migrant Council submitted the following comments:

- Page 1, Chapter 1, Executive Summary: In Section “State Workforce System” under “Illinois Department of Employment Security,” second item, suggested is reference to “Title I-D” can be removed as this is the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) which is not the Title III Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program at the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security). Recommended is a check be made about the “Native American” program in Illinois. Comment addressed as follows: In Section “State Workforce System” under “Illinois Department of Employment Security,” modify the second item to read: Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers Monitor Advocate System (Title III).

- Page 23, Chapter 3, Illinois Workforce System: In Section “State Agency Capacity,” under “Illinois Department of Employment Security,” second item, suggested is removing reference to “Title I-D” as this is the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) which is not the Title III Migrant and Seasonal Program at Employment Security. Also suggested is a check be made about the “Native American” program in Illinois. Comment addressed as follows: In Section “State Agency Capacity,” under “Illinois Department of Employment Security,” modify the second item to read: Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers Monitor Advocate System (Title III).

- Page 39, Chapter 7, Implementation of State Strategy: In Activity 3.1, suggested is changing “migrant workers” to “migrant and seasonal farmworkers” if that is the population that was intended. Comment addressed as follows: In Activity 3.1, the second to the last sentence should be modified to read: These targeted populations will include the long-term unemployed, low-skilled, low-literate and low-income adults, those receiving public
assistance, out-of-school youth, veterans, individuals with disabilities and migrant and seasonal farmworkers workers.

(C) DATA ASSESSMENT.

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

The state continues to meet its goals to provide migrant and seasonal farm workers (MSFW) quantitatively proportionate services. The data for the previous years is available at Attachment Y at: www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan.

(D) ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

Goals for the last AOP (2014 – 2018) were achieved until the summer of 2015. In PY 2015 total MSFW applications were 990. Of these, 44 were referred to employment; 960 received staff assisted services; 591 were referred to supportive services and 583 received career guidance. Due to the mid–season resignations of outreach personnel (for full–time positions in the migrant assistance community), the hasty mid–season retirement of the State Monitor Advocate (for family reasons) and bad weather, we met 4 out of 5 Equity Ratio Indicators, 3 out 5 Migrant Indicators of Compliance in Part Three with zero in Part Four and one out of seven Minimum Service Level indicators at 4QPY16.

IDES will be hiring 3 temporary outreach staff for the 2016 MSFW season and have posted for a full–time State Monitor Advocate position. The staff providing outreach services in Local and significant offices will be offering migrants the full array of services including the employment complaint system. They will provide Job Service information relevant to the needs of the agricultural and food processing community which will be accomplished in large part through conducting employer–coordinated visits to fields and events to meet with MSFWs and provide service information at the beginning and close of the employment seasons. The same information will be shared with Illinois Migrant Council and other agencies that provide services to MSFW’s.

(E) STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

The acting State Monitor Advocate, John Waters, has reviewed and approves the plan.
The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3)); Yes

2. The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers; Yes

3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and Yes

4. State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations. Yes
The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).
A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is the eligible agency in the State with the responsibility of administering the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 – Title II Adult Education and Literacy Act.

In 2014, the ICCB integrated the Illinois Adult Education ABE/ASE Content Standards with the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards released by the Illinois State Board of Education as well as the Office of Career Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE). In addition to the above two referenced documents, the Standards Document also incorporated the Common Core, States’ Career Clusters Initiative Essential Knowledge and Skill Statements, and the International Society for Technology in Education’s National Educational Technology Standards for Students. This cross referenced Standards Document, along with a companion Curriculum Guide provides the foundation for curriculum development. All current programs have participated in statewide curriculum institutes to develop new curriculum as necessary or to align current curriculum to provide effective as well as rigorous content based instruction. An online repository is being developed that will house statewide approved curriculum and lesson plans to be used for adult education instruction. Instructors will be able to access, upload and provide recommendation for curriculum and lesson plans.

A statewide planning committee consisting of adult education instructors, local program directors, state staff and subject matter experts has been developed to review and evaluate the effectiveness and ensure alignment of the curriculum to the CCR standards.

To ensure the sustainability of standards based instruction throughout the State, ICCB has created a five-year implementation and sustainability plan. This plan institutes a train–the–trainer model. Cohorts of instructors who successfully complete and provide applicable evidence of standards–based instruction will be used to train the next cohort of instructors. It is the goal of ICCB to create a system of CCR content specialist/master teachers that will provide regional training, technical assistance, and guidance to instructors in their region, thus ensuring statewide rigorous standards based instruction in all programs.
B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide the adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of local activities.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that—
  1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
  2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Creating Pathways for Adult Learners: An Illinois Strategic Plan for Adult Education Applicants should consider the priorities listed below as set forth in the Strategic Plan for Adult Education “Creating Pathways for Adult Learners” in delivering the activities below.

- Assessment, Curricula, and Instruction: Adopt and align assessments, curricula and instructional practices that prepare adults for family-sustaining jobs and career advancement.

- Support Services and Follow-up Services: Provide comprehensive student support to reduce personal barriers to retention and progress that promote smooth transitions within and between educational/training providers and into the workforce.

- High Quality Teaching and Professional Development: Ensure that all adult educators have ongoing, specialized professional development in career cluster framework to deliver high quality instruction and to use classroom support that fosters learner persistence.

- Partnerships: Build and sustain mutually beneficial relationships with key partners to identify regional skill needs and design and provide career pathways programs that meet those needs. Work with local workforce boards to develop instructional services that meet the needs of the local and regional economy.

- Research, Data and Accountability: Continue to expand and strengthen the State’s accountability system to document, evaluate and improve student and program outcomes on a continuing basis.

- Program Design: Design pathways for adult education learners interested in employment or further education, regardless of their skill levels at point of entry. This may require an alignment with local and regional strategies and activities as outlined in the Unified State Plan.
The strategic vision for adult education is a “foundation of a career pathways system that prepares adult learners for economic self-sufficiency.” The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) sees a system of adult education as one that is transforming the lives of adult learners and readying them for continuing education and employment. Applicants must address how they will develop instructional curriculum that will ensure:

- Multiple entry points for all adult learners.
- Accelerated learning options.
- Industry–focused curricula that is contextualized and prepares learners for employment and careers, such as bridge programs, Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS), Integrated Career Training and Academic Preparation System (ICTAPS) or other integrated models. These industry curricula must be aligned with regional and local planning area labor market information (LMI).
- Support Services and a transitional framework that accelerates student progress and completion.
- Alignment with Common Core and College and Career Readiness Standards to ensure students are college ready.
- Responsiveness to the workforce needs in Illinois as well as at the regional and local levels.
- Collaboration with partners, including the local one-stop and workforce boards in connecting adult learners to services and employment opportunities.
- Innovative approaches to build and deliver instruction that meets the needs of the adult learner and of the workforce and employers.
- Accountability and the use of data to improve instruction and services.
- Using evidence-based and integrated teaching methodologies that are based on research.
- Utilizing professional development that maximizes the skills of adult educators to support quality teaching and learning in the classroom.

ICCB will publish and distribute broadly a Request for Proposals (RFP) in the spring of 2017, which will be aligned with the Unified State Plan and other education and workforce plans.

During a competitive year, to be considered for funding, applicants must:

1. Be an Eligible Applicant, as listed below:

   - Local educational agencies (LEA)
   - Community–Based Organizations (CBO) or Faith-Based Organizations (FBO)
   - Volunteer Literacy Organizations
• Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)
• Public or Private nonprofit agencies
• Libraries
• Public-housing authorities

• Nonprofit institutions that are described previously and have the ability to provide adult education and literacy services to eligible individuals

• Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries or authorities described previously

• Partnership between an employer and an entity described above

2. Respond to the RFP by the due date.

3. Complete all required portions of the application.

4. Meet all deadlines and other elements as specified in the RFP.

5. Meet all eligibility requirements.

The past effectiveness of an eligible applicant in improving the literacy skills of adults is a strong factor in the delivery of adult education instruction and supportive services and will be used in the evaluation of the grant applications. In addition, the alignment of local adult education activities with the local area plans and services as well as local regional workforce plans are essential.

The ICCB recognizes the following activities are allowable under Adult Education and Literacy under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

• Adult education;
• Literacy;
• Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
• Family literacy activities;
• English language acquisition activities;
• Integrated English literacy and civics education;
• Workforce preparation activities; or
• Integrated education and training.
The ICCB will also consider the success of a funded provider in meeting or exceeding such performance measures as identified by the federal National Reporting System (NRS). The ICCB also recognizes the need to build a career pathway system for adult learners that will enhance education and employment opportunities.

In order to accomplish this, the program/applicant must address the thirteen considerations under federal law and one state consideration. Applications will be evaluated using a rubric with an assigned a point value for each proposed activity as outlined in the proposal.

1. The documented need of the eligible applicant to serve individuals in the community who are most in need of adult education and literacy services and those who are in need of career pathway services, including individuals who have literacy skills or who are English language learners (i.e., literacy statistics, regional and local needs as identified under the Unified State Plan, etc.).

2. The applicant demonstrates the ability to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including those with learning disabilities.

3. The past effectiveness of an eligible applicant in improving the literacy skills of adults, including those with low literacy levels; and demonstrates the ability to meet or exceed the levels of performance.

4. The applicants proposed adult education services and activities demonstrate an alignment with local plans and services and with local one-stop partners.

5. The applicant demonstrates the use of instructional practices and activities that research has proven to be effective in teaching to achieve learning gains, is of sufficient intensity and duration, is built on a strong foundation of research and effective educational practice, and includes the essential components of reading.

6. The applicant demonstrates the effectiveness in providing instruction in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics and English language acquisition and is based on best practices, scientific valid research and the state standards.

7. The program activities effectively employ advances in technology including the use of computers as a part of instruction including distance education to increase the quality of learning which leads to improved performance.

8. The applicant proposes activities that provide contextualized learning including integrated education and training as well as bridge programs to ensure that an individual has the skills needed to compete in the workplace, transition to post-secondary education and training, advance in employment and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

9. The applicant proposes activities that are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, support staff and administrators who meet state guidelines, have access to high quality professional development.

10. The applicant’s activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, post-secondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce investment boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies,
business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways.

11. The applicant offers flexible schedules and supportive services (such as child care and transportation) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs.

12. The applicant maintains a high quality information management system, as determined by the ICCB and has the capacity to report participant outcomes and to monitor program performance measures.

13. The local communities have a demonstrated need for additional English literacy programs and civic education programs.

14. The proposed budget is consistent with the eligible provider’s activities, is cost efficient within administrative guidelines and places emphasis on serving the target populations.

Eligible Instructional Categories: Programs applying for federal and state adult education resources must abide by the policy and procedures set forth. All programs must provide instruction that is direct, at a distance, or a blended approach, direct and at a distance. These activities are important to the success of the program and the students served.

The purpose of Adult Education is to create a partnership among the Federal Government, States and localities to provide, on a voluntary basis, adult education and literacy activities, in order to:

- assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency;
- assist adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that are necessary to becoming full partners in the educational development of their children; and lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family;
- assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through career pathways; and
- assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in improving their reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English; and mathematics skills; and acquiring an understanding of the American system of Government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

The Adult Education activities below are the approved instructional activities for an ICCB approved adult education program.

Adult Education

- Adult Basic Education (ABE) curriculum consists of approved courses designed to bring a student from grade zero through the eighth-grade competency level, as determined by standardized testing. This curriculum as well as the instruction must increase a student’s ability to read, write, speak and
perform mathematics. This should also lead to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or high school equivalency; and transition to post-secondary education and training; or employment. Beginning level courses cover grade zero through the third-grade competency level. The intermediate level courses cover fourth-grade competency through the eight-grade competency. Each level of courses covers each content area and includes College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) in the curriculum. The curriculum is designed to accommodate the concept of individualized instruction and includes courses in general basic skills; reading literacy and communication skills; computational skills; technology and digital literacy skills; workforce/employability skills; life skills; career exploration/awareness skills; workplace literacy; family literacy/parenting; bridge instruction and U.S. Citizenship education.

• Adult Secondary Education (ASE) curriculum consists of approve courses designed to bring a student from grade nine through the twelfth-grade competency level, as determined by standardized testing. This curriculum as well as the instruction must increase a student’s ability to read, write and speak and perform mathematics. This should also lead to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or high school equivalency; and transition to post-secondary education and training; or employment. The curriculum is designed to prepare a student to achieve a High School Equivalency credential and includes College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) within each curriculum. The curriculum is also designed to accommodate the concept of individualized instruction and includes courses in basic skills; general academic and intellectual skills; reading literacy and communication skills; computational skills; technology and digital literacy skills; workforce/employability skills; life skills and career exploration/awareness skills; workplace literacy; family literacy/parenting; bridge instruction and U.S. Citizenship education.

• English Language Acquisition (ELA) curriculum consists of approved courses designed to include instruction in English for those whose native language is not English. The curriculum and instruction is designed to help eligible individuals who are English Language Learners achieve competence in reading, speaking, comprehension and mathematics skills that leads to attainment of a secondary school diploma or high school equivalency; and transition to post-secondary education and training; or employment. Beginning, intermediate and advanced courses include a curriculum in listening, speaking, reading and writing using the English language. Technology and Digital Literacy skills as well as CCRS are also included in the curriculum. Other courses using the English language may include instruction in life skills, citizenship education, career exploration, employability skills (e.g., the OCTAE’s Employability Skills Framework), workplace literacy, family literacy, bridge instruction and Integrated English Literacy/Civics (IEL/Civics). Student levels are based on proficiency as measured by ICCB–approved standardized tests. The curriculum is designed to accommodate the concept of individualized instruction.

• Workforce Preparation Activities/Career Exploration/Awareness Skills curriculum may include instruction in workplace language, career readiness/exploration, development of career plans, career awareness job readiness, career development including, the use of career cluster essential knowledge and skills statements, job skills and career interest inventories, soft skills, preparation for college entrance exams and career planning. This also includes instruction related to employment opportunities, access to job information and self-analysis techniques. The instruction is offered at every level of instruction (ABE/ASE/ELA), but each level will only include the most appropriate information for the level of instruction.

• Integrated English Literacy/Civics (IEL/Civics) includes education to immigrants and other limited proficient populations and are designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that
lead to economic self-sufficiency; and integrate with the local workforce development system and its
functions to carry out the activities of the program, in combination with Integrated Education and
Training programming. Curriculum for this instructional category assists participants to effectively
engage in the education, work and civic opportunities of the United States of America. The Illinois
IEL/Civics competencies consist of seven thematic units (components) of civics development and
more than 40 practical and immediately relevant activities for immigrant integration and success.
The seven thematic units include: Consumer Economics (CE), Community Resources (CR),
Democratic Process (DP), Employment (EM), Health Services (HE), Housing (HO) and U.S. School
System (SS). Throughout a combination of classroom instruction and community connections, these
competencies will enable participants to effectively engage in education, work, civics opportunities
and rights and responsibilities of citizenship while continuing to build their English language and
literacy skills. The competencies may be used at each level of ELA instruction; however, a program
should increase the level of difficulty as the student progresses.

• Bridge Programs/Career Pathways services must be incorporated into the instructional process for
all adult learners and at all educational functioning levels. This includes the incorporation of career
awareness, career development activities designed to assist learners in making informed decisions
regarding making smooth transitions to post-secondary education. The use of bridge programs has
been piloted and has shown promise in introducing adult learners to different career options while
increasing basic skills. Bridge programs provide adult education learners with contextualized
occupation-specific basic skills needed to successfully transition to post-secondary education and
employment in high-growth industries. The ICCB and other key state agencies and stakeholders,
developed a bridge definition that is used to ensure consistency in use statewide. This group defined
a bridge as a program that prepares adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter
and succeed in credit-bearing post-secondary education and training leading to career–path
employment in high-demand, middle- and high-skilled occupations. The goal of bridge programs is to
sequentially bridge the gap between the initial skills of individuals and what they need to enter and
succeed in post-secondary education and career-path employment. Three core elements are
required to be included as part of a bridge program:

  o Contextualized instruction that integrates basic reading, math and language skills and
    industry/occupational knowledge.

  o Career development that includes career exploration, career planning within a career area, and
    understanding the world of work (specific elements depend upon the level of the bridge program and
    on whether participants are already incumbent workers in the specific field).

  o Transition services that provide students with the information and assistance they need to
    successfully navigate the process of moving from adult education or remedial coursework to credit or
    occupational programs. Services may include (as needed and available) academic advising, study
    skills, coaching, referrals to individual support services, e.g., transportation and child care.

• Integrated Education and Training (IET) is comprised of three components: adult education and
literacy activities, workforce preparation activities and workforce training. Each of these components
is offered concurrently for educational and career advancement. Illinois currently has one model of
integrated education and training and one that is in development: ICAPS and ICTAPS. The ICAPS
(Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System) model is an IET model that blends both adult
education and Career and Technical Education instruction in a format leads to a post-secondary
credential or an industry recognized credential and post-secondary credit, in addition to high school
equivalency certification. The ICTAPS (Integrated Career Training and Academic Preparation
System) model is an IET model that integrates adult education with workforce training that is non-credit post-secondary education or training, but leads to industry recognized credentials, skills gains and high school equivalency certification.

• Vocational Skills Training (VOC) consists of an ICCB AEFL–approved course that is short-term in nature. VOC training leads to an industry recognized certificate or credential related to a specific career pathway. The training must provide entry–level workforce skills which lead to employment and prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in credit-bearing post-secondary education and training leading to career-path employment in high–demand, middle– and high-skilled occupations. A program may choose to offer Vocational Skills Training in addition to the required instructional categories listed above. The recommended method to offer VOC training is as a part of either a bridge program or through an Integrated Education and Training (IET)/ and/or Integrated Literacy and Civics Education (IL/CE) programs.

• Family literacy is an integrated, intensive service for at-risk families that must include, but is not limited to, the four components—adult education, parenting education, parent/child activities and child education—of family literacy. Each component is defined as:

  o Adult education as defined above.

  o Parenting education includes information and support for parents on issues such as childbirth, development and nurturing of children, child rearing, family management, support for children learning, effective advocacy strategies for the rights of all children, and parent involvement in their child's education.

  o Parent/child activities include regularly scheduled, interactive literacy–based learning activities for parents and children.

  o Child education includes age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences (includes early childhood programs, school programs and/or childcare). Only three components—adult education, parenting education, and parent/child activities—can be funded by ICCB Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFL) funds. The fourth component—child education—must be funded by an appropriate child education partner.

• Literacy coordination may include coordination, tutor training, tutor scheduling and other support activities that promote student learning gains, and may include volunteer literacy. Literacy services must be in conjunction with Adult Education and Family Literacy instructional programming provided by trained volunteers to target population students. Literacy services support classroom instruction and increasing student learning gains. Trained volunteers may work with students during classroom instruction under the supervision and coordination of a paid instructor in an AEFL funded class. Instructional hours may not be claimed for services provided by volunteer tutors.

• Workplace Adult Education and Literacy may include coordination of workplace education projects that are designed to meet the unique needs of participating workers and employers. Workplace Adult Education and Literacy refers to an individual's ability to read, write, speak, compute and otherwise solve problems with enough proficiency to meet every day needs on the job and to pursue professional goals. This includes a knowledge of phonics, word identification and comprehension, which enables the employee to read technical information and complex manuals. Workplace Adult Education and Literacy also refers to the ability of an individual to function in job situations involving higher order thinking and the capacity to evaluate work situations and processes. An employee who
is workplace literate has increased job success, experiences fewer frustrations in the workplace, has higher self-esteem and has less need for retraining as the job and technology change. Workplace literacy can be funded with Adult Education and Literacy funds. All other rules of the AEFL grant apply as well. The ICCB will continue to work to align new terminology with the requirements of the federal law (e.g., Workplace Literacy to Workforce Education).

Allowable Support Services Activities:

A. Student transportation services are for students enrolled in Adult Education and Literacy eligible activities. Every effort should be made to coordinate these services with other entities within the community.

B. Childcare is the care of children during the time an adult education student is engaged in eligible adult education and literacy instructional activities. The student must be the primary care giver of the child. Every effort should be made to coordinate these services with other entities within the community.

C. Guidance and counseling are activities with students which may include: (1) Learning styles inventories, (2) Evaluating the abilities of students, (3) Assisting students to make their own educational and career pathway choices, including career awareness and development activities, etc. (4) Assisting students in personal and social development, (5) Assisting staff members in planning and conducting guidance programs and (6) Providing transition services that will lead to post-secondary education and training, bridge programs, integrated education and training programs, employment and other activities of statewide significance. Social work activities include: (1) Improvement of students’ attendance, (2) Interventions to assist students dealing with the problems involving home, school, and community, (3) Provision of referral assistance and (4) Retention strategies.

D. Assistive and adaptive equipment or special printed materials are for adult education and literacy students with special learning needs.

E. Assessment and testing are activities to measure skill gains of individual students enrolled in eligible adult education and literacy activities through the use of the approved assessments for Illinois Adult Education and Literacy. However, other diagnostic assessments designed to place students in appropriate and eligible adult education and literacy instruction are allowable.
SPECIAL RULE

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.
Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of Title II, subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

a. Adult education and literacy activities;
b. Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
c. Secondary school credit;
d. Integrated education and training;
e. Career pathways;
f. Concurrent enrollment;
g. Peer tutoring; and
h. Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

The state agency allocates funds to eligible correctional institutions using the same grant or contract process as the other eligible providers under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and carries the same provisions for direct and equitable access. The same criterion used to determine an applicant’s eligibility under Section 231 also applies to all applicants of demonstrated effectiveness listed under Section 203.5, including Correctional Education Institutions. Each applicant will be evaluated using the same rubric and scoring process. Priority will be given to applicants who provide services to incarcerated individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of enrolling in the instructional program.

Eligible instructional activities and services are provided in correctional institutions throughout the state. The services provided include an assessment of an individual’s educational functioning levels to determine mandated adult education and literacy instructional programming needed in reading, writing, math and speaking to earn a High School Equivalency (HSE) Certificate or high school credit as well as the acquisition of the English language.

The ICCB funds adult education in correctional institutions and are designed to provide offenders with basic skill instruction as well as career pathway preparation. Given the low skill levels of many offenders, the ICCB adult/correctional education model understands that most participants’ re-entry preparation will begin with adult education. Adult education is designed to help individuals strengthen their basic skills, earn their high school credential and transition to further education and training such as career and technical education or other post-secondary education programs. Illinois’ adult education programs within a correction framework may provide the following core services that are consistent with the requirements for all statewide adult education programs: Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE) and English Language Acquisition (ELA). These services are based on the needs of the institution. Other services that may be offered include: (1) adult education and literacy activities; (2) special needs assessment, as determined by the eligible agency; (3) integrated education and training or bridge programs; (4) career pathways; (5)
concurrent enrollment; and (6) peer tutoring. The ICCB will work with the Second Chance program through the Correctional programs to establish a process for individuals to transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism. The ICCB will, in conjunction with the Correctional programs, develop a process of referral to adult education programs in the area of release and to the local community college. Special Note: Secondary School Credit programming is not currently provided through correctional education with AEFL funds, however this provision may be considered in the future.

Through partnerships, adult education programing will align its educational services with the labor market needs to determine jobs without criminal history restrictions. For example, the Illinois Department of Corrections developed a bridge program in Culinary Arts to provide instruction to those with low basic skills. The use of contextualized instruction and the incorporation of career awareness and workforce preparation activities will be incorporated into instruction to provide the offenders with knowledge and skills necessary for their success. The ICCB will work with core and required partners under WIOA to provide extensive wrap-around services to ensure successful recruitment, retention, re-entry, transition into post-secondary education, career training and workforce preparation to incarcerated individuals to reduce recidivism.
D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ESTABLISH AND OPERATE INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 243 OF WIOA, FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WHO ARE ADULTS, INCLUDING PROFESSIONALS WITH DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS IN THEIR NATIVE COUNTRIES.

The State will use Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education funds in combination with integrated education and training activities to address how to prepare adults including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

A. The state will evaluate the applications under Section 243 based upon the ability to deliver blended English Language Acquisition (ELA)/Civics as a part of instruction as well as each applicant must address the required competencies as listed below in item B, and concurrent enrollment in an Integrated Education and Training (including Workforce Preparation Skills) instruction. Programs may offer instruction in partnership with other entities in order to achieve the requirements of the law. For example: A program (community based organization (CBO)) may decide to deliver contextualized instruction in their literacy program and another program (CBO or community college) may provide the related training activities or workforce preparation activities. Applications will also be evaluated on how well instruction is connected to in-demand industries.

B. As part of this requirement, Illinois Adult Education requires those enrolled in Integrated English Literacy Civics (IEL/Civics) to demonstrate competency in achieving outcomes. The state will update the competencies such as the Democratic Process, Community Resources, U.S. School System, Housing, Employment and Consumer Economics. The goal of IEL/Civics is to provide integrated programs of service that incorporate English literacy and civics education to help immigrants and other Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations to effectively participate in education, work and civic opportunities in this country as well as the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

C. Other activities of statewide significance will be added to ensure compliance with achievement of Section 243.

Special Note: Programs who provide civics education only in conjunction with English Literacy instruction must do so with under Section 231.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL FUND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF TITLE II, SUBTITLE C, INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION SERVICES AND HOW THE FUNDS WILL BE USED FOR THOSE SERVICES.

A. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education activities will be funded in combination with integrated education and training activities and will be awarded to providers that address how their programs will:
o prepare adults including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that leads to economic self-sufficiency;

o integrate with the local workforce development systems to carry out the activities of the program;

o address the civic competencies outlined below;

o have a demonstrated population need in the area; and

o integrated education training and workforce preparation skills with curriculum.

The same criterion used to determine an applicant's eligibility under Section 231 also applies to all applicants of demonstrated effectiveness listed under Section 203.5. Each applicant will be evaluated using a rubric and scoring process that is in accordance with the activities established under Section 243 and will also include the thirteen considerations under law as well as one consideration under state guidelines.

B. As a part of this requirement, Illinois Adult Education requires those enrolled in Integrated English Literacy Civics (IEL/Civics) to demonstrate competency in achieving outcomes. As part of the application process, Adult Education Providers must address Illinois’ specific IEL/Civics Competencies in their proposals. Each applicant must address competencies such as the Democratic Process, Community Resources, U.S. School System, Housing, Employment and Consumer Economics. The goal of IEL/Civics is to provide integrated program of services that incorporates English literacy and civics education to help immigrants and other Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations to effectively participate in education, work and civic opportunities in this country. Each applicant must address the required competencies as listed above and will integrate Integrated Education and Training and Workforce Preparation Skills. Priority will be given to those programs that provide Integrated Education programs and Workforce Preparation Skills as a part of instructional programming as well as partnering with other entities in the delivery of services.

Special Note: Programs who provide civics education only in conjunction with English Literacy instruction must do so under Section 231.
E. STATE LEADERSHIP

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA.

A. The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) will provide services that have been identified previously under this plan. The ICCB will assist programs in the coordination and delivery of key services within the one-stop delivery system. These services may include instructional, assessment, support and referral services. The ICCB will develop and provide relevant training to assist locals in the development of partnerships within the one-stop system. The ICCB will also provide technical assistance to all core partners in understanding the adult education system and more specifically, training in appropriate administration of educational assessments to students. The ICCB will continue to assist local programs in the development of career pathway programs and will identify tools and develop curriculum needed to support students entering career pathway programs.

B. The ICCB will develop and continue to enhance high quality professional development to support instruction provided to local adult education programs. Professional development will be or will continue in the following areas: Leadership Excellence Academy (LEA) for administrators in the overall evaluation of program instruction and services provided; Evidence Based Reading Instruction (STAR) (i.e., enhanced toolkit); Content Standard Development and Implementation (i.e., enhance ABE/ASE standards; develop English Language Acquisition (ELA) standard alignment with CCR Standards); Curriculum and Lesson Planning Development; ELA; Civic Education; Integrated Literacy and Civics; Competency Development and Implementation; Transitions and Workplace Education; development of Instructional Leaders and Instructor Academies; Increase Technology based professional development; Integrated Education and Training; Bridge Programs; Career Awareness; Math, Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening; host conferences, workshops, advisory committees, training and meetings that promote career pathways education, transitions, adult literacy; develop tools and conduct relevant research that show the connection of professional development to instruction; and other activities that support the ongoing enhancement of adult education instruction.

C. The ICCB will also assist programs with incorporating technology into instruction; research and develop distance education tools that may be used to enhance instruction; identify and implement the most recent research in reading, writing, math ELA, and transitions; and develop standards for implementation into instruction. The ICCB will also provide training to local adult education programs in the development of partnerships within the one-stop system.

The agency will work with state workforce board and one-stop system to determine appropriate training needed across partner organizations. The ICCB will host a variety of regional planning summits/forums/workshops for all partners to enhance and align partnerships in the delivery of services. In addition to the research activities identified, the ICCB will continue to participate in studies and research projects that are designed to provide a better understanding of how to enhance Illinois adult education. Also, the ICCB will conduct studies that will allow innovation to occur at the state and local levels. Lastly, the ICCB will encourage partnership research across partner agencies to determine how to best serve the student/client.

D. The ICCB utilizes a statewide data collection system (DAISI, Data and Information System Illinois) to monitor the performance of all Title II-funded adult education and literacy providers. The data collected in DAISI is then analyzed and used to evaluate the quality and improvement of adult education and literacy activities by assessing the performance of providers through their educational
functioning level increases or measurable skills gains. Each provider must complete fiscal/administrative and programmatic risk assessments, which determine whether a program should have increased requirements for reporting and monitoring, as a part of the grant application process. Additional monitoring takes place in the form of desktop monitoring and through regional support visits to program sites to determine compliance and provide technical assistance. Information about models and proven or promising practices are disseminated to providers throughout the state through the use of electronic mailing lists and also at bi-annual Administrators’ Meetings held by the ICCB for this purpose as well as to engage providers in statewide efforts. A variety of monitoring activities will be used in order to ensure programs ability to achieve outcomes as well as the use of corrective action plans for those programs which are low performing.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE.

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) will carry out the following permissible state Leadership Activities:

• The support of a statewide Professional Development. Utilizing federally allocated State Leadership Funds, Illinois adult education will maintain a Statewide Service Center Network (SCN) to provide professional development. The ICCB will continue to work with the SCN to identify professional development needs of the state based upon regional assessments and local program data. While the SCN addresses a host of professional development needs, each also has its own unique priority to address the goals in the state. These goals include: ongoing professional development at the state, local and regional level to improve the quality of adult education instruction; participation in reading research projects; enhancement to the statewide instructional content standards; and the development of bridge programs which includes the design, curriculum and instruction.

• The development and implementation of technology applications, translation technology, or distance education, including professional development to support the use of instructional technology. ICCB will continue to examine technology use at all levels in order to expand the reach of instruction. This includes technology use by administrators, instructors, students as well as maximized use in the classroom. The ICCB will expand its offering of online professional development. Lastly, the ICCB will expand its use of digital literacy at all levels, but more specifically the English Language Acquisition (ELA) levels of instruction through participation in the Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) English as a Second Language (ESL) Pro Project.

• Develop content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways. The ICCB will explore models that link or connect student interests to instruction. This may include but is not limited to a framework that will assist programs in helping students identify career needs and opportunities, development of a process that will place students on a pathway, career awareness and instruction map designed to illustrate a student’s movement from basic instruction through career pathway programs and portfolio development. The ICCB will continue to add additional Integrated Education and Training (IET), Integrated English Literacy and Civics (IELC), Workforce Preparation, and bridge programs through ongoing technical assistance via the Transitions Academy. The academy is a year-long process to assist programs in the development of their career pathway programs.
• The development and implementation of a system to assist in the transition from adult education to post-secondary education, including linkages with post-secondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education. The ICCB will work through its’ Area Planning Council process and the Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIB) to develop a streamlined approach to link students to post-secondary education, transitions between and among programs, partnering on bridge programs and integrated programs, employment and other services and activities.

• Activities to promote workplace adult education and literacy activities. The ICCB has partnered with businesses, Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, post-secondary education throughout the state in the development of a Health Care, Manufacturing and Transportation, Distribution and Logistic (TDL) curricula. The ICCB will research workplace programs that will connect students to employment and will work closely with the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) to identify statewide curricula in other career pathway areas to be developed.

• Developing and piloting of strategies for improving teacher quality and retention. The ICCB will conduct research on the professional development requirements in an effort to enhance the quality of instruction as well as professionalize the field of adult education. Currently, the ICCB requires eight professional development hours annually for instructors. The ICCB will also conduct research on full–time vs. part–time instructors in programs and the impact on performance outcomes. The ICCB will identify and pilot strategies geared toward teacher quality and also provide curriculum and lesson planning training to increase the knowledge of instructors. The ICCB will develop instructional staff pathways to improve teacher quality and retention. This will include master teachers, transition specialists, content specialists and standard proficient instructors.

• Integration of literacy and English language with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers. The ICCB will conduct research on effective models and pilot the development and implementation of these models.

• Identify curriculum frameworks and aligning rigorous content standards and identify the knowledge and skills needed of students. The ICCB will continue to revise and enhance the content standards developed in Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE) and ELA; and will continue to develop a crosswalk of student knowledge and skills to other post-secondary education areas and occupational programs. The ICCB will continue to explore the alignment of ELA standards to CCRS.

• The development and implementation of programs and services to meet the needs of adult learners with learning disabilities or English language learners, which may include new and promising assessment tools and strategies that are based on scientifically valid research, where appropriate and identify the needs and capture the gains of such students at the lowest achievement levels. The ICCB will continue to explore options to identify and assess the instructional needs of students. This can be accomplished by exploring other diagnostic tools that can be used with literacy students, those with learning disabilities and ELA learners. The ICCB will continue to provide Special Learning Need trainings to local programs as well as the American with Disability Coordinator Training to all adult education programs throughout the state. The ICCB will partner with the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services in the identification of new tools and strategies that can be integrated.

• Outreach to Instructors, students and employers. The ICCB will continue to identify instructors who have incorporated promising practices into instruction to help develop strategies that can be used in the classroom. Currently, the ICCB uses instructors/coordinators in the development of standards,
curriculum and lesson planning activities. ICCB will continue to work with employers in the development of career pathway curriculum development and connecting students to employment. ICCB will also develop a process of getting student input on adult education related activities.

• Other activities of statewide significance that promote the purpose of this title. The ICCB will continue to work with CTE, business and industry and the state workforce board to develop and connect workforce activities within the state. Also, the ICCB will continue to identify the areas of need and enhance the system of adult education to promote career pathway and literacy activities, especially for those at the lowest literacy levels.

The ICCB may also fund other permissible activities such as:

• Developing and disseminating curricula, including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults;

• The provision of assistance to eligible providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve the objectives of Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and in measuring the progress of those programs in achieving such objectives, including meeting the state adjusted levels of performance; or

• The development and implementation of a system to assist in the transition from adult education to post-secondary education, including linkages with post-secondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education.

• Pilot projects and other related projects that show integration and alignment of services by partnering with core and required partners under WIOA.

• The development of activities for the strategies listed under the Unified State Plan.

• The development of activities to embed technology skills and the use of a variety of distance education tools into instruction.

• Using technology to disseminate best practices.

• The integration of English Language Acquisition instruction with the Civics Education Competencies.

• The development of strategic planning activities that align adult education to workforce and post-secondary education, training activities and WIOA related activities.
F. ASSESSING QUALITY

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) will evaluate and has evaluated programs on a continuous basis and through a variety of processes. Programs will be assessed and monitored throughout the year through program visits, the Desktop Monitoring Tool, fiscal and compliance monitoring and through the Data and Information System – Illinois (DAIS–I). In addition, a state Policy and Procedure manual is widely distributed and is posted on the ICCB website, https://www.iccb.org/adult__ed/?page_id=618.

ICCB funded Adult Education and Family Literacy Programs will be monitored to determine:

• program improvement;

• the degree to which the programs comply with ICCB, state and federal policies and guidelines;

• information needed in local program planning efforts; and

• the ability to achieve state and federal requirements.

During the course of the fiscal year all programs will be reviewed through a combination of program visits by ICCB staff, the state’s Desktop Monitoring Tool and approved data collection system. Staff, on an ongoing basis, will review program data and inform programs where there is a need for improvement. In addition, a probation and watch status was instituted in 2014 that will be continued to ensure a program receives significant technical assistance to improve program outcomes.

Fiscal and compliance monitoring will be conducted throughout the year to determine compliance with federal and state requirements. Programs will be contacted to schedule the review. Reviews may be onsite and or may be handled through online submissions. Specific information on fiscal and compliance monitoring will be provided to programs in advance of the monitoring review.

The ICCB will provide data and procedures for funded providers to evaluate their own performance in comparison to statewide performance and in comparison to funded providers with comparable students, goals and/or activities. The providers will use data reports that have been developed through the data collection system. These include:

• Student Error reports that indicate errors on a student record and where to locate/ correct the specific error(s).

• Enrollment Reports that provide information about the number of students served and units generated in each instructional category by a specific funding source.

• Master List Reports generate a list by funding source of students by student name and Social Security number. The Master List Reports also provide a breakdown of the enrollment hours generated by students in the specific funding source by instructional category.
• Program Status Reports include all students eligible to be served through Adult Education and Financial Literacy (AEFL) funds. It is the most inclusive of the required ICCB reports and provides demographic and testing data that can be used to foster continuous program improvement.

• National Reporting System (NRS) Performance Reports exist in two versions. The first version reflects all activity including all post-testing. The second version applies an attendance hour filter to the testing results. When the second version is generated, the results of any post-testing conducted before the minimum attendance hours were met as established by the test publishers will be excluded from the report. The second version (with AH filter) reflects what programs will be granted credit for in terms of NRS completion rates.

In addition, several Static reports are available that provide a snapshot of program performance at a more granular level. These include:

• AEFL Certification of Units Report represents the total number of students the program will be granted credit for in terms of the ICCB-AEFL funding formula. It represents the total number of students meeting the criteria for inclusion (In Open-Entry classes, have accrued at least 7.5 attendance hours in a single class section, prior to dropping. In Fixed-Entry classes, have been successfully retained through the mid-term date and have accrued at least 7.5 attendance hours in that single class section, prior to dropping) and be served through an approved funding source.

• Cohort: Follow-up Measure 3—Earned High School Equivalency (HSE) or Secondary Credential report includes all learners who take all HSE tests and exit during the Fiscal Year and all learners who are enrolled in adult high school (HSCR classes) at the high Adult Secondary Education (ASE) High Level and exit during the Fiscal Year.

• Cohort: Follow-up Measure 4—Entered Post-secondary report includes students from the group that was counted as a success for the Earned HSE/High School Diploma cohort or that entered the program with a Secondary Credential or was enrolled in a course specifically designed to transition them to post-secondary education and exited during the Fiscal Year.

• IEL/Civics Report provides information about the number of students supported with IEL/ Civics dollars and the competencies completed by these students.

• High School Equivalency (GED 2014 Series) data match report by student, or program record includes all data matched HSE results for all students that provide consent.

• Generation Reports detail the total number of student enrollments, attendance hours and class/individual persistence rates by funding source, instructional category or other classification.

• Instructor Individual and Summary Outcomes Reports include students that meet the criteria to be in the Program Status Report. In addition, to be claimed with a specific instructor, the student must meet the usual requirements plus have at least 7.5 attendance hours with that instructor (and have reached the midterm successfully if enrolled in fixed entry classes).

• NRS Core Performance Measures reports provide a detailed breakdown of educational functioning level (EFL) gains and separates students into four distinct categories to illustrate areas where program performance meets targeted levels.
• Professional Development Reports illustrate levels of compliance to minimum professional
development requirements by instructors. Tracks quantity, type and cost of professional
development hours accrued in a fiscal year.

• Program Outcomes Report (Building) indicates student post-test percentage, percentage of
students gaining levels, average attendance hours at specified building by instructional category,
persistence rates for students and overall average attendance hours by students at specified
building.

The ICCB also assesses the quality of the professional development programs that are designed to
improve instruction in all areas. The assessment process is done through evaluations of training
sessions and research conducted to determine outcomes and levels of learning. The ICCB is in the
process of developing a professional development portal that will, among other functions, track
instructor professional development that can be linked to classroom outcomes as an additional
method of evaluating the effectiveness of the professional development. Professional development
is still in development for instructional staff, including both volunteer and paid personnel. Some
professional development training has been developed for special learning needs and the specific
needs of adult learners. This area is undergoing further development, with plans to survey students
regarding the specific needs that are unique to the adult education population.

The ICCB regularly meets with the professional development service centers to assess, develop and
revise the training and development offerings in order to ensure that the most effective and
promising practices and methods are being utilized and highlighted. For example, plans are in place
to fully examine and assess the existing professional development that is available for career
pathways and transitions in efforts to determine what to keep, what needs to be developed and
added and what needs to be retired. The expansion of integrated education and training and the
growing focus on career pathway education and training necessitate the most up-to-date, relevant,
and effective training resources and materials. The reports noted above will also be used to
determine professional development needs as well as to assess outcomes as it relates to
professional development. For example, in recent years research was conducted on the
effectiveness of evidenced-based reading instruction. This research helped to determine the local
training needs and how things are to be structured.
States must provide written and signed certifications that

1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan.  Yes

2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program.  Yes

3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan.  Yes

4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law.  Yes

5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan.  Yes

6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan.  Yes

7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan.  Yes

8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program.  Yes
CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant’s Organization Illinois Community College Board

Full Name of Authorized Representative: Dr. Karen Hunter Anderson

Title of Authorized Representative: Executive Director
SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to OCTAE_MAT@ed.gov
ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions). Yes

2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA. Yes

3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA. Yes

4. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities; Yes

5. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program; and Yes

6. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. Yes
The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA
A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:


SRC Comment: SRC members continue to believe that consistency of services at DRS offices is important. SRC is in the final stages of the development of a Best Practices Guide (checklist) that will aid DRS staff in providing consistent services. SRS would like to see this guide tested by DRS per previous agreement, with benchmarks to show progress toward the goal of provision of consistent service levels throughout the state.

DRS Response: DRS agrees to conduct a test of the best practices checklist in several offices around the state and evaluate the effect on service consistency.

SRC Comment: SRC would like to recommend a regular statewide needs assessment and satisfaction survey be conducted as part of this effort, in order to gauge where priority areas for service improvement lie. Items in the survey should center on physical and programmatic accessibility, with an emphasis on customer satisfaction and ease-of-use.

DRS Response: DRS agrees that ongoing assessment of service needs is an important factor in assuring the effectiveness of the VR program, as is an evaluation of customer satisfaction. DRS intends to continue development of online survey response systems to gather information at a reasonable cost going forward.

SRC Comment: SRC members believe that job placement and retention can be impacted by several factors. In addition to job-related skills, including enhancements such as job coaching and on-the-job training, DRS should incorporate other skills necessary for individuals to not only obtain, but retain employment. These skills could include independent living skills, interpersonal skills and self-management skills such as efficient communication, planning, coping with stress, time management and good nutrition management.

DRS Response: DRS agrees that these factors are important components for many individuals seeking to obtain and retain employment. In contract arrangements with community rehabilitation programs, DRS has included requirements that pre-employment services such as these be included when required by an individual.
SRC Comment: Previously, SRC expressed a desire for transition services to begin at a younger age. SRC understands that State laws regulate transition services for students with disabilities beginning at age 14. However, could some of the soft skills be taught at a younger age? Could youth complete unpaid volunteer work or internship experiences at a younger age through DRS contacts?

DRS Response: DRS provides pre–employment transition services to students with disabilities beginning at age 14, consistent with State law as required by WIOA. These services include a variety of work–based learning experiences for students during their high–school years.

SRC Comment: SRC members believe that career exploration, job shadowing, volunteer experiences and internships are valuable tools for obtaining work related experience and ultimately help in obtaining employment. SRC encourages DRS to continually increase both paid and unpaid work–based learning opportunities for VR customers as a means of promoting employment.

DRS Response: DRS supports increasing the scope of work–based learning experiences for youth with disabilities, including internships, apprenticeships and other non–traditional experiences that increase the knowledge and capability of the individual and enhance future opportunities for competitive integrated employment.

SRC Comment: SRC members believe that creation of a Workforce Development Unit within VR would be beneficial. This unit could concentrate on attracting small–to–large employers within the State and explain the benefits of hiring persons with disabilities. This unit could offer support to employers by providing educational tools that would help guide employers on the best way to handle certain situations and disabilities. It could include examples of how to accommodate certain needs for all disability types, including mental health. This would help ease the fears of employers who may not hire persons with mental illness, intellectual or other disabilities. If a Workforce Development unit is not developed within DRS, then DRS should work out an agreement with other core WIOA partners IDES, ICCB and the Illinois Department of Commerce whereby those agencies leverage more of their resources to serve individuals with disabilities through strategies with a proven track record of success under DRS.

DRS Response: DRS is working with the Institute for Community Inclusion to develop a business engagement team to accomplish the purposes recommended by the Council. At present DRS is not able to create a special organizational structure for this purpose. However we expect that the technical assistance team will enable DRS to provide effective business services using existing staff.

SRC Comment: SRC supports you goal to complete a joint Strategic Plan between DRS and SRC. When would it be possible to begin work on this?

DRS Response: DRS supports establishing a strategic approach for the VR program and believes that working in cooperation with the Council is the most appropriate way to move forward. Presently DRS is working with other service divisions of the Department of Human Services on a strategic plan that will more fully integrate services to individuals and families. DRS will continue to work with the SRC to incorporate VR planning considerations into the larger strategic effort.

SRC Comment: SRC members are still concerned about the lack of jobs in particular geographic areas of the state. Are there other avenues that could be used by DRS to promote employment in these rural areas?
DRS Response: DRS is working with its workforce partners to develop employment plans in 10 economic development regions across the state, including both urban and rural regions. A detailed analysis of industry sectors and employment opportunities was conducted with the intent of promoting economic employment in each region.

SRC Comment: Previously, DRS indicated that they were going to include short term job coaching and how it can be utilized in staff training modules. Has this happened? If so, has the use of short–term job coaching increased? Has its inclusion improved VR outcomes? If short–term job coaching has not yet been included in staff training modules, the SRC recommends that this be done.

DRS Response: DRS has developed training modules for counselors regarding the effective use of community rehabilitation program services, including short–term job coaching. Contract arrangements with CRPs now specifically include short–term job coaching as a service. At this time DRS does not have utilization data on this service.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT’S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL’S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

Responses are incorporated in the previous section.

3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT’S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL’S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

Not applicable.
B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

The Division of Rehabilitation Services maintains a considerable number of Third Party Agreements with other units of government, primarily school districts. These Third Party Agreements are designed to increase the availability of vocational rehabilitation services to specific populations of people with disabilities. DRS has a contract with each entity that is consistent with Federal regulations (34CFR361.26) and includes the following provisions: (a) the vocational rehabilitation services to be provided are identified; (b) the local agency assures that non–Federal funds are made available to DRS; (c) the local agency assures that DRS approval is required before services are provided; and (d) the local agency assures that all other State plan requirements, including the Order of Selection policy, are applied to persons receiving services through the agreement.
The following is a list of the Third Party Agreements now in place.

1. William Rainey Harper College

The purpose of this agreement is to provide post–secondary training to students in northern Cook County with hearing impairments, learning disabilities, and other disabilities who are eligible for VR program services. The college is a two–year public community college, which serves the northern part of Cook County. It is located in Palatine, Illinois.

2. The Evaluation and Development Center

The purpose of this agreement with the Board of Trustees of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale is to provide a continuing program of rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities in Southern Illinois. This agreement provides evaluation and placement, independent living, residential, information and referral, and rehabilitation engineering services to customers eligible for services from the VR program. This program primarily serves the Illinois counties of Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Perry, Saline, Williamson, and Union.

3. Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP)

The purpose of this program is to provide rehabilitation services for customers who are still in secondary school. DRS has 144 contractual arrangements with school districts and cooperatives throughout the state. Of that number 135 are third–party contracts and nine are not. These arrangements resulted in VR services being provided to 8,586 in the most recent state fiscal year, and a total of 9,807 as of January 2016. STEP services typically include: classroom instruction focusing on career exploration and the development of job readiness skills; independent living, self–advocacy and community mobility skills training; and multiple work experiences in both school and community–based work sites. DRS anticipates that approximately 10,000 students will be served in the STEP program in PY2016.

Schools with Third–Party STEP Contracts in State Fiscal Year 2016 (July 1 2015 to June 30 2016)

AERO Special Education Cooperative Burbank, IL Allendale Association Lake Villa, IL Alton Community School District 11 Alton, IL Anna Jonesboro Community High School Anna, IL Aurora West Pub School District 129 Aurora, IL Ball–Chatham Community Unit School District 5 Chatham, IL Belleville Township High School District 201 Belleville, IL Bethalto Community Unit 8 Schools Bethalto, IL Black Hawk Area Special Education District East Moline, IL Board of Education Evanston, IL Board of Education City of (Peoria) Peoria, IL Bradley–Bourbonnais Community HS District 307 Bradley, IL Cahokia Unit School District 187 Cahokia, IL Canton Union School District 66 Canton, IL Chicago Board of Education District 299 Chicago, IL Children’s Home Association Peoria, IL Collinsville Community Unit School District 10 Collinsville, IL Community High School District 155 Crystal Lake, IL Community High School District 218 Oak Lawn, IL Community High School District 99 Downers Grove, IL Community Unit School – Woodstock Woodstock, IL Community Unit School District 95 Lake Zurich, IL Community Unit School District 200 Wheaton, IL Community Unit School District 203 Naperville, IL Community Unit School District 220 Barrington, IL Community Unit School District 300 Algonquin, IL Community Unit School No 2 Serena, IL Cons High School District 125 Lincolnshire, IL Cook County High School District Cicero, IL County of Jackson (dba Community Unit School District 186) Murphysboro, IL County of Kankakee 5 Manteno Manteno, IL Decatur Public Schools District 61 Decatur, IL Dixon Unit School District 170, LCSEA Dixon, IL DuPage High School District 88 Villa Park, IL East Alton – Wood River Community High School Wood River, IL
Eastern IL Area Special Education (Mattoon) Charleston, IL Edwardsville Community Unit 7 Edwardsville, IL Elmhurst Community Unit School District 205 Elmhurst, IL Elmwood Park CUSD 401 Franklin Park, IL Evanston Township High School Evanston, IL Exceptional Children Have Opportunities) South Holland, IL Fenton High School District 10 Bensenville, IL Frankfort Community High School District 168 West Frankfort, IL Franklin Community Unit School Franklin, IL Freeport School District 145 Freeport, IL Galesburg Community Unit School District 205 Galesburg, IL Geneseo Community Unit School Geneseo, IL Glenbard District 87 Glen Ellyn, IL Granite City Community Unit School District 9 Granite City, IL Hancock–McDonough ROE 26 Macomb, IL Harlem Consolidated School Machesney Park, IL Harvard School District 50 Harvard, IL Highland Community Schools District 5 Highland, IL Hinsdale Township High School Hinsdale, IL Huntley School District NO 158 Algonquin, IL Indian Prairie School District 204 Aurora, IL Iroquois Special Education Association Crescent City, IL Jacksonville School District 117 Jacksonville, IL JAMP Special Education SVCS Grand Chain, IL Jersey County CUSD 100 Jerseyville, IL Johnsburg Community Unit School Johnsburg, IL Joliet TWP H S DIST 204 Joliet, IL Kankakee Area Special Ed COOP Kankakee, IL Kankakee School District 111 Kankakee, IL Kendall County Special Ed Cooperative Yorkville, IL LaGrange Area Dept. of Sp Ed LaGrange, IL LaSalle–Peru Township High LaSalle, IL Leyden High School District 21 Northlake, IL Lincoln–Way Com High School New Lenox, IL Livingston County Special Serv Pontiac, IL Lockport Township High School Lockport, IL Maine Township High School Park Ridge, IL Marengo High School District 154 Marengo, IL Mascoutah Community Unit 19 Mascoutah, IL Massac County USD 1 Metropolis, IL Mattoon Community Unit School Mattoon, IL McHenry Community High School District 156 McHenry, IL Mid–State Special Education – Christian County Morrisonville, IL Mid–State Special Education – Fayette and Bond Counties Morrisonville, IL Mid–State Special Education – Montgomery County Morrisonville, IL Mid–Valley SPEC ED Joint Agrmt St. Charles, IL Moline School District 40 Moline, IL Mt. Vernon Township High School Mt. Vernon, IL Niles Township District 219 Skokie, IL Northern Suburban Spec Ed District Highland Park, IL Northwest Sp Ed District Freeport, IL Northwest Suburban Special Ed Mount Prospect, IL Oak Park & River Forest High Oak Park, IL O’Fallon Township High School O’Fallon, IL Ogle County Educational Coop Byron, IL Ottawa Township High School Ottawa, IL Perandoe Special Education District Red Bud, IL Plainfield School District 202 Plainfield, IL Princeton Township High School Princeton, IL Proviso Township High School Forest Park, IL Putnam County Community Unit Granville, IL Quincy Public Schools Quincy, IL Regional Office of Education (McLean–Dewitt)Normal, IL Rochester CUSD 3A Rochester, IL Roxana Community Unit School Roxana, IL Rural Champaign Co Sp Ed Coop Rantoul, IL Sangamon Area Sp Ed District Springfield, IL School Assn for Special Educ (DUPAGE CO.) Naperville, IL School District 131 (Aurora East) Aurora, IL School District 205 Board of Rockford Rockford, IL School District 234 Ridgewood High Norridge, IL School District Unit 46 Elgin, IL Seneca High School Seneca, IL South Eastern Special Educ Ste. Marie, IL South Macoupin Association Staunton, IL Southern Will County Coop 22 Joliet, IL Southwest Cook County Cooperative Assoc. for Special Education Oak Forest, IL Special Education Association Bartonville, IL Special Education District of Lake County SEDOL Gages Lake, IL Special Education Services Aurora, IL SPEED Special Education Joint Agreement, District 802 Chicago Heights, IL Springfield Public School District 186 Springfield, IL Streator Township High School Streator, IL Sycamore CUSD 427 Sycamore, IL Tazewell Mason Cty's Sp Ed Assn Pekin, IL The Hope School Springfield, IL Thornton Township High School District 205 South Holland, IL Triad Comm Unit School District 2 Troy, IL Tri–County Special Education Murphysboro, IL Valley View School District 36 Romeoville, IL Vermillion Association of Sp Ed Danville, IL Villa Grove C U District 302 Villa Grove, IL Wabash and Ohio Valley Special Education District Norris City, IL Warren Township High School Gurnee, IL West Central IL Sp Ed Coop Macomb, IL West Washington Community Okawville, IL Whiteside of Carroll Counties Sterling, IL Williamson County Special Marion, IL Winnebago County Special Rockton, IL Woodford County Special Ed Assoc Metamora, IL
2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

DRS develops third party agreements through a contractual process that specifies the rehabilitation services to be provided in each case. No services can be provided until the contractor agrees to the terms and conditions established by DRS, including (a) DRS maintains responsibility for establishing program eligibility and development of the IPE, and (b) the contractor must provide period reports of expenditures of non–federal funds.

3. ALL STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS WILL APPLY

requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

DRS third party contracts contain the provision that all services provided must be consistent with the Unified State Plan.
C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;

General Information on Interagency Cooperation

Illinois DRS maintains cooperative agreements and working relationships with a wide variety of state, local and education entities that provide services to individuals with disabilities. DRS presently has over 25 interagency agreements in effect with other state agencies. DRS has a long–standing agreement with the Illinois State Board of Education regarding the provision of transition services to students with disabilities age 14 and older. This agreement has been revised to comply with WIOA requirements. The revised agreement places greater emphasis on the roles of each party in preparing students for the transition to employment, education and training.

Presently DRS provides VR services to around 10,000 students with disabilities each year through contracts with 144 school systems. DRS provides vocational rehabilitation services to another 1,000 high school students with disabilities outside of the contractual system. DRS also has agreements with 12 state universities and 36 community colleges in Illinois regarding funding for services to students who are VR customers.

DRS has contracts and working agreements with around 150 not–for–profit community rehabilitation programs, which serve about 4,000 VR customers each year, providing vocational evaluation, job placement and supported employment services.

DRS maintains working relationships with the Statewide Independent Living Council, as well as the Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living, and has contracts with centers for independent living to provide a variety of rehabilitation services.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

DRS has a longstanding partnership with the Illinois Assistive Technology Project (IATP), the state AT grant recipient. IATP provides a variety of services to Illinois citizens with disabilities, including many who are participants in the DRS VR program. Cooperative activities include joint staff training as well as the use of IATP staff for technology consultation on specific VR cases. DRS also works with IATP staff on general issues involving the accessibility of computer systems throughout Illinois state government. IATP also provides consultation on specific items of assistive technology and their applicability for VR program purposes. DRS has also worked with IATP on innovative approaches to purchasing assistive technology equipment for benefit of VR program customers.
3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

DRS does not have formal interagency agreements with Rural Development Programs operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

4. NONEDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

DRS does not have specific agreements with non–education agencies serving out–of–school youth with disabilities. Out–of–school youth are served through contracts that DRS has developed with community rehabilitation program agencies, although the contracts are not targeted at that specific age group. Data for the current state fiscal year through February 2016 show that 35 percent of individuals served were under age 25, thus meeting the WIOA definition of youth with disabilities.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

DRS does not presently have formal interagency agreements with state use programs operated within Illinois. The state use program in Illinois is coordinated by the Department of Central Management Services, which awards contracts to state use providers and coordinates purchases on behalf of state agencies.
D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Describe:

1. DSU’S PLANS

The designated State unit’s plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

The DRS interagency agreement with the State Board of Education identifies financial roles and responsibilities for transition services. This agreement has been re-written and is under review pending signatures by department heads. The overall responsibility for funding a student’s educational program lies with the local education authority, with support from the State Board of Education. DRS provides funding for vocational rehabilitation services, both through the STEP program and through general VR caseloads. DRS has contracts with 144 school districts, of which 135 involve the use of school funds as VR matching funds. DRS coordinates and provides support for operational costs of regional Transition Planning Councils. DRS establishes qualifications for personnel it employs, and the State Board establishes qualifications for personnel working for school districts. Services provided to students with disabilities through STEP or through another arrangement focus on the key elements of pre-employment transition services as defined in WIOA: job exploration counseling; work-based learning experiences, counseling on postsecondary education, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. While STEP places an emphasis on employer-paid work in the community, each of these aspects of transition services are available to students based on individual need. Since 2009 DRS has worked with schools that have third-party cooperative agreements to ensure that federal VR requirements are followed in the provision of transition services. This has included a contract addendum as well as specific exhibits that are now incorporated into the contract package itself. DRS believes that these measures have resulted in an environment where all parties understand and are in compliance with these requirements. DRS provides consultation and technical assistance to educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities. This is accomplished through a number of mechanisms. DRS has assigned qualified rehabilitation counselors to act as liaison to every high school in Illinois. A fundamental part of the liaison role is to provide consultation and technical assistance to educators involved in the transition process. Transition Planning Councils in each area of the state work with school districts to identify students with disabilities needing transition services. Aggregate services needs are reported annually to the State Transition Council. Through the counselor liaison relationships, students with disabilities have ready access to the VR program. DRS counselors provide consultation regarding vocational services and provide general information on disability services available in the community. DRS also sponsors the Next Steps parent-training program to assist families in understanding their children’s needs regarding transition services. Illinois has a committee dedicated to transition issues, the Interagency Coordinating Council, that develops policy and establishes roles and responsibilities. DRS participates on the Council along with the State Board of Education and other state agencies involved in serving youth with disabilities. DRS also coordinates regional Transition Planning Councils, with school and community rehabilitation programs also participating. State law requires that transition planning begin at age 14 ½. DRS assists local schools in building a vocational focus as the student progresses through the school system. The Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP) is funded by DRS and provides financial support for students with disabilities during the high school years. Participation in DRS services for students in transition services, either through
STEP or through another arrangement, is incorporated in the IPE during the time the student is in school. An IPE is developed no later than 90 days after the student has been certified as eligible for the VR program. Development of the IPE is coordinated with the development and of the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) and transition plan.

2. INFORMATION ON THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING VR SERVICES;

The agreement provides that DRS will shall provide consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students from school to post–school activities and ensure that local DHS–DRS staff participate in IEP meetings where transition planning occurs. In addition, DHS–DRS shall establish and collaborate with local Transition Planning Committees to outreach to and identify students with disabilities in need of transition services as early as possible in the transition planning process. DRS and the local TPCs will also plan for the availability of community services for students with disabilities before and after exiting secondary education.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

The agreement provides that DRS and the State Board of Education will cooperatively participate in planning, training, policy development, data collection, and resource identification and dissemination to improve transition planning for students with disabilities. Also, both parties agree to provide technical assistance to local education agency personnel regarding transition planning services for students with IEPs. Transition planning will facilitate the development and completion of IEPs and transition plans in coordination with the IPE for VR services.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

The agreement describes the role of the State Board of Education to ensure that local education agencies engage students with disabilities and their families in transition planning when it is a mandated part of the IEP process. In addition ISBE will encourage school districts to annually submit a summary of each eligible student’s IEP transition goals and transition services resulting from the IEP team meeting to the appropriate local Transition Planning Committee (TPC). The agreement describes the role of DRS to include providing consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students from school to post–school activities and ensure that local DRS staff participate in IEP meetings where transition planning occurs. The agreement also addresses the financial responsibilities of each party.
D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

The agreement provides that DRS will collaborate with local Transition Planning Committees to outreach to and identify students with disabilities in need of transition services as early as possible in the transition planning process. DRS and the local TPCs will also plan for the availability of community services for students with disabilities before and after exiting secondary education.
Describes the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

DRS has contractual agreements with non-profit rehabilitation providers to provide services to VR customers. DRS works with the Facilities Advisory Council consisting of provider representatives to discuss issues and identify service needs in an ongoing manner. In 2013 DRS began the process of developing formal contracts in the place of cooperative working agreements with non-profit rehabilitation service providers. This is part of a state-level effort to establish greater consistency in human service contracting. DRS contracts specify the responsibilities of the service providing agency, the performance basis of the contract, and the rates to be paid to the provider. DRS has contracts with around 150 not-for-profit community rehabilitation programs, which serve about 4,000 VR customers each year, providing vocational evaluation, job placement and supported employment services. DRS maintains working relationships with the Statewide Independent Living Council, as well as the Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living, and has contracts with centers for independent living to provide a variety of rehabilitation services. DRS develops community service contracts based on an assessment of need at the local level. Counselors and office supervisors work with regional administrators to identify specific areas of need and potential provider agencies qualified to provide services. To the extent possible DRS has utilized one-time funding to establish new service contracts with providers. Depending on performance, contracts are continued using VR funds and are converted to a performance-based methodology.

Illinois has developed an emphasis on performance-based or outcome-based funding for human services. DRS has converted over 80 percent of its VR-funded contracts to a performance basis in the last three years. This means that providers earn payment when individuals are working in the community, with the maximum payment based on the individual achieving at least 90 days of successful employment. DRS believes this method aligns the interests of the individual, the provider and the VR program.
F. ARRangements and CoopErative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

For many years DRS has had a number of contracts and cooperative working agreements with community provider agencies to provide both supported employment and extended services to individuals with most significant disabilities. DRS has a standing committee of community rehabilitation programs known as the Facility Advisory Committee which meets regularly to discuss service arrangements, including but not limited to, supported employment and extended services. DRS believes that this group is the best mechanism for communicating with provider agencies and maintaining a grasp of the demand for these services. DRS also has an interagency cooperative team that involves the DHS Division of Mental Health to provide ongoing support services to individuals with serious mental illness. In PY2016 DRS expects to continue the following levels of funding for supported employment activities. Supported employment services provided with Title VI–B funds: approximately 150 individuals, total funding $1.05 million, with 20 provider agencies. Supported employment provided with Title I funds: approximately 1,450 individuals, total funding $3.8 million, approximately 45 provider agencies. Beginning in July 2012 DRS implemented a new rate structure for supported employment services, and DRS anticipates that the new rate structure will encourage providers to become involved in providing supported employment services. DRS will not be able to provide the same level of extended services as in the past, due to an elimination of state general revenue funding for this program. In PY2016 no state funds will be available for extended services. DRS continues to pursue additional state funds. In addition, DRS is working to identify other sources of funding for extended services. DRS has worked with DHS Division of Developmental Disabilities to specify circumstances under which individuals can receive long-term extended supports through the DD waiver program. DRS also intends to pursue ongoing changes in its supported employment program. Illinois has seen a trend where the number of individuals participating in supported employment services has declined in recent years. DRS plans to reverse this trend by focusing on youth with disabilities who require additional support to enter and retain employment. In addition DRS intends to convert its supported employment contract arrangements to a performance basis within the next two years. The present funding system is based on the use hourly service rates which is not sufficiently tied to successful employment results.
G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR SERVICES; AND

DRS is beginning a new era of relationships with employers. The focus of activities in this era will center on the relationships in each Local Workforce Innovation Area (LWIA), of which there are 22 in the State. DRS has an office supervisor or other manager as member on each local board (LWIB), which presents the single greatest opportunity for interactive communication with employers as well as other workforce business representatives. Each LWIB is in the process of developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to formally describe many of the relationships within the area. This will include mechanisms for sharing information on employment opportunities as well as career exploration and work-based learning opportunities at the local level. In addition, DRS representatives are participating in the regional planning process related to WIOA implementation. This process is based on 10 economic development regions (EDRs) around the state. Within each region, extensive data analysis has been conducted to identify employment sectors that are most likely to account for job growth and expansion in the next five years. The employers in these key expansion sectors will be those targeted for the highest level of business engagement, including discussions around establishment of work-based learning experiences, including internships and apprenticeships. DRS staff will work closely with other LWIA business services teams to ensure that services are not duplicated.

DRS is participating in the job driven technical assistance program through the Institute for Community Inclusion. The goals of this project are to establish a business engagement strategy and to train VR staff to provide basic business engagement services, including those related to disability awareness, workplace accommodations and benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. The target for the first year is to establish relationships with 20 employers. While these services will be distinct from representation of specific job candidates, DRS anticipates that provision of business engagement services will result in competitive employment outcomes for its customers.

The activities discussed above are intended to have a positive impact on VR customers of all ages. Other activities focused specifically on transition age youth will be developed in consultation with other entities, including the Transition Advisory Councils, community rehabilitation program agencies, and service providers working with the WIOA Title I youth programs. For years DRS has relied on its Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP) to create work-based learning opportunities for students with disabilities. While this has been an effective practice, there is much less capacity for development of work-based learning opportunities for out-of-school youth with disabilities. DRS believes that the Title I experience in serving out-of-school youth provides a key opportunity for inclusion of youth with disabilities.

As noted above, development of these opportunities will take place through a localized planning process and be focused on the growth sectors identified through regional planning.
2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

As noted elsewhere in the plan, most efforts surrounding provision of pre–employment transition services to students with disabilities are accomplished through third–party contracts with school districts. These contracts are performance based and emphasize employer–paid community work experiences for students. The arrangements with employers are developed by the third party contractors rather than by DRS directly. DRS monitors student work experiences through monthly reporting by the contractors.

DRS has begun exploring other relationships with employers for development of work–based learning experiences. One is through cooperative relationship with the state Department of Commerce, the Title I agency in Illinois. DRS has agreed to partner in development of youth projects that will include a variety of work–based learning experiences in selected industry sectors across the state.

In addition, the new business engagement process being developed by DRS is expected to result in additional opportunities for work–based learning experiences for students and youth with disabilities. This process is targeted at high–growth industry sectors and is designed to respond to needs identified by businesses.
H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

State Medicaid Agency: Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) In the last two years DRS has worked with HFS as part of the Illinois Employment First initiative. This is a multi–agency effort to promote competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities in both the private sector and public sector. To date there has been a special effort to facilitate hiring of people with disabilities within state government. In addition, Illinois is involved in the Vision Quest technical assistance effort sponsored by the Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy. Subject matter experts have worked with Illinois state agencies to review policies and service funding rates to identify opportunities for change that will facilitate employment goals. Additional efforts have focused on policy issues relating to employment options for individuals participating in Medicaid waiver programs administered through HFS and operated by other state agencies.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

State Agency for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) DRS and DDD have participate on the State’s Employment First Task Force, as well as the DHS employment first team. DHS activities have focused on the Balancing Incentive Program (BIP), which provided one–time funds to Illinois to promote innovative services that will benefit individuals with disabilities. Both DRS and DDD have utilized BIP funding to create pilot projects for customized employment for people with intellectual disabilities. BIP funds will expire in 2016 and both divisions are working to develop options for continuing customized employment services on an ongoing basis.

DRS and DDD have worked to coordinate efforts around supported employment services, in particular looking at policies and rules that may need revision in order to make an effective transition from VR supported employment to DDD supported employment for individuals requiring long–term supports.

In addition DDD and DRS are cooperating to work with employers that hold Dept. of Labor subminimum wage certificates, including development of options for contacting individuals working for subminimum wages and offering counseling around options for pursuit of competitive integrated employment. Many subminimum wage employers have relationships with DDD and that agency is in a good position to improve communication with VR.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

State Agency for Mental Health Services: Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health (DMH) DRS has enjoyed an effective partnership with DMH for several years. This partnership is centered on provision of vocational services through the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) service model. DRS and DMH have worked with the Psychiatric Research Center to implement a
fidelity–based service model that has been shown to be very effective in assisting individuals with serious mental illness in becoming employed. DRS and DMH have a cooperative funding model in which DMH utilized Medicaid funding to the greatest extent possible and DRS provides VR funds to support the vocational aspects of the IPS model.

DRS has worked with DMH to expand IPS services to a youth population and intends to continue expansion to this group through additional pilot projects as funding becomes available. In addition both agencies intend to participate in evaluation projects that document the effectiveness of IPS as an evidence–based practice.
I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

DRS believes it has sufficient staff on hand to staff the VR program. Each staff category has a normal number of vacant positions, and DRS works aggressively to fill vacancies as soon as possible, in conjunction with DHS personnel managers. There has been little growth in the overall VR caseload in the last several years, which means that DRS has sufficient staff available to serve people with disabilities meeting its order of selection policy, and has the capacity to fill vacant positions to continue to meet that level of need. DRS has 235 VR counselor positions with 210 on hand and 25 vacant positions, and 24 rehabilitation and mobility instructors, with 19 on hand and five vacant positions. These staff are supported by 133 rehabilitation case coordinator positions, of which DRS has 122 on hand with 11 vacant positions. Counselor vacancies are somewhat higher than normal due to a personnel classification issue that has since been resolved. DRS anticipates that it will be able to fill these positions in the near future and return to a more normal pattern of vacancies. Data as of February 2016 show a total of 29,156 active cases in the DRS VR program. This gives an average of 139 individuals per filled rehabilitation counselor position and 239 per filled case coordinator position. These averages are somewhat higher than historical trends, but will return to a more normal level when additional positions are filled. Specialty counselor positions have a slightly higher vacancy rate, but one that still allows DRS to provide services to select populations. DRS has 30 staff positions for counselors certified to communicate in sign language with eight vacancies in this category, as well as 24 counselors fluent in Spanish, and nine vacancies in that category.

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

When fully staffed the number of positions by title will be: rehabilitation counselors 235; rehabilitation case coordinators 133; rehabilitation and mobility instructors 21; field office supervisors 37; field office support 56; staff administrative support 30; business enterprise program for the blind staff 13; central office staff 61; bureau chiefs 2; and assistant bureau chiefs 6.

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.
DRS anticipates that its long–term replacement rate will remain the same despite several developments in the last two years. There was a large increase in retirements in May 2012 due to pending changes in the state pension system, with 22 VR program staff retiring along with 40 other DRS staff. Following that there were disruptions in the state hiring process due to management of layoffs and labor contract uncertainty. These issues have been resolved and regular job postings resumed. Based on job application trends, DRS anticipates that sufficient applicants will be available to fill nearly all posted vacancies within a few months. The number of staff on hand and projected annual number of replacements by title are: rehabilitation counselors 210 (20 projected replacements); rehabilitation case coordinators 122 (15); rehabilitation and mobility instructors 19 (4); field office supervisors 37 (5); field office support staff administrative support 28 (4); business enterprise program for the blind staff 13 (1); central office staff 61 (5); bureau chiefs 1 (1); assistant bureau chiefs 6 (1).
B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

There are four nationally–accredited rehabilitation counselor education programs in Illinois: Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago; Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago; Northern Illinois University, DeKalb; and Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. The program at the University of Illinois in Champaign has been discontinued.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

The most recent available data on enrollment in and graduation from the MA programs in rehabilitation counseling at the four universities is shown in the table below. A total of 123 students were enrolled and 48 graduated. The estimated replacement rate for DRS counselors is 15 per year, although the replacement rate will be higher in PY2016 due to administrative delays in filling vacancies. While many of these graduates will choose not to work for DRS, DRS believes that these programs make a significant contribution to its ability to hire new staff and replace staff who leave DRS. In Illinois graduates with an MA in rehabilitation counseling who pursue CRC certification are eligible to become licensed as a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) through the State of Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation.

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

The most recent data for rehabilitation counseling graduates by program is: Illinois Institute of Technology, 14; Northeastern Illinois University, 10; Northern Illinois University, 13; and Southern Illinois University, 11.

2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

Each year DRS estimates the number of staff needed to operate the VR program, particularly the number of rehabilitation counselors needed. In addition, DRS works with university programs to estimate the number of students graduating from the programs. DRS has strengthened its relationships with the four university programs providing master's degree training for rehabilitation counselors, through formation of the University Coordinators Meeting which meets regularly to
discuss educational needs, hiring practices and internships. DRS has surveyed the four university programs and has information on the expected number of graduates each year. This information is analyzed in relation to administration estimates of the number of rehabilitation counselor positions that will need to be filled in the next year. In the last 12 months DRS has begun the process of hiring new VR counselors after an administrative delay. There have been numerous applicants for each vacant position, indicating a sufficient supply of qualified counseling staff. Based on the information available from the university programs and the number of applications for posted vacancies, DRS believes that there are adequate numbers of qualified personnel available to fill all needed rehabilitation counselor positions. The newest counselor–training program was established in 2005 at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU). The program is available to all students but especially focuses on Hispanic enrollments. DRS administration has been in frequent communication with the new NEIU program, and has arranged for a presentation to the faculty and students. DRS has made several presentations to program staff and students regarding employment with our agency. DRS actively recruits minority individuals and individuals with disabilities for rehabilitation counselor and other positions. The Department of Human Services personnel unit works with DRS to publicize available positions in DRS, attending numerous job fairs likely focusing on minority students and students with disabilities. The State of Illinois has recruiting policies, which assist minority individuals in obtaining employment in key positions, and also encourages training and education for current employees. State policy also encourages the hiring of individuals with disabilities. DRS worked with the state personnel agency to create a position dedicated to monitoring and assisting with the hiring of persons with disabilities in state jobs. In addition to recruitment, DRS works actively to promote the retention of individuals with disabilities and individuals from minority backgrounds. These efforts include those sponsored by the Department of Human Services, of which DRS is a part, as well as through other state government organizations and membership associations. The purpose of these activities is to facilitate the training and professional development of staff from these populations, to promote understanding of the need for a diverse workforce, and to encourage the participation of staff in a variety of cooperative efforts aimed at making a contribution to the organization. These efforts include: (a) the Upward Mobility program, which is designed to further the careers of state employees from minority backgrounds as well as individuals with disabilities. This program provides support for a variety of training and educational opportunities for staff during the course of their employment with the state. (b) the Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities, which engages state employees with disabilities in activities related to promoting the hiring and career advancement of people with disabilities. DRS administration is closely involved in the operations of the ICED. (c) The Illinois Association of Minorities in Government sponsors an annual conference addressing issues of concern to state employees from minority backgrounds, which is attended by DRS staff. (d) the Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees also holds an annual conference, which focuses on state employees from Hispanic/Latino backgrounds. DRS sponsors staff to attend this conference each year. DRS believes that its sponsorship of attendance at these conferences and encouragement of membership in these organizations is a positive step in promoting a diverse workforce and a means of ensuring a high rate of job retention among its employees with disabilities and employees from minority backgrounds. Internships DRS has informal agreements with the four rehabilitation counselor training programs in the state to provide internship and practicum placement options for graduate students. At present DRS is not able to offer paid internships to counseling students. We continue to provide unpaid internships whenever possible, both to support the universities and students as well as to provide a job preview to students interested in working for DRS when they complete their training. Strategies for Retaining, Recruiting and Hiring Personnel DRS uses several strategies to recruit, hire and retain rehabilitation personnel. Key elements are promotion and publicizing the VR program, locating job candidates, monitoring the state hiring process, and identifying methods to encourage retention of staff. The University Coordinator Committee is composed of representatives from the four rehabilitation education programs in the state. DRS administrators meet regularly with this committee to develop an understanding of the
current training capacity of the programs, and to facilitate communication about DRS hiring practices and vacancies. DRS works with the DHS personnel unit to conduct outreach activities to individuals who may be interested in state employment. DHS maintains a regular schedule of job fairs, community events and recruitment initiatives that include a focus on hiring minority individuals. DRS offers unpaid internship and practicum opportunities in its field offices to graduate students from the five rehabilitation education programs. These are arranged with the university faculty and DRS administrators as needed. DRS also makes presentations to undergraduate students to expose them to the field of vocational rehabilitation and provide them with information on graduate rehabilitation education programs. DRS has an ongoing team composed of staff and administrators that focuses on issues related to hiring and retention of qualified staff. This group attempts to identify strategies that motivate staff to continue their employment, including rewards and recognition for high-level performance.

3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

State Degree Standard. For several years, the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) has had the requirement for all new counselors of a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a closely related field. The Master's degree requirement for DRS vocational rehabilitation counselors is supported by state licensing categories as well. The applicable licensing requirement in the state is for a "Licensed Professional Counselor" license, which is issued by the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation. This license is a generic counseling license and is not specifically for vocational rehabilitation counselors. The license requires a Master's degree in counseling, rehabilitation counseling, psychology or related field. For purposes of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD), the requirement of a Master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling or a related field will be considered the state standard.


All DRS staff are expected to participate in training events annually. Annual employee performance evaluations are designed to include training needs and expectations as identified by both the employee and the supervisor. Certain training events sponsored by DRS are mandated for attendance by staff in particular titles, such as rehabilitation counselors and rehabilitation case coordinators. SDS initiates new training activities and also responds to specific requests for training from DRS administrators and field office supervisors. SDS coordinates the New Employee Orientation (NEO) training in which each new DRS staff person participates in the first months of his
or her employment. This includes an overview of agency policies as well as a review of how the VR program operates in Illinois.

DRS administration periodically reviews the training objectives of the division to ensure that staff have an understanding of the VR program and the field of rehabilitation that is consistent with current policies and practices, including an understanding of the labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities. To that end DRS has emphasized training around changes to the Rehabilitation Act brought forth by the passage of WIOA, as well as changes to the workforce system external to the VR program. DRS has cooperated with the state Title I agency to encourage staff participation in weekly webinar presentations by other core and required partner agencies, to ensure a greater understanding of other workforce programs and how they may be of benefit to people with disabilities. The most recent annual regional meetings featured presentations by WIOA partner agencies regarding program offerings and resources available to VR staff as well as job seekers with disabilities. DRS continues to explore additional training opportunities to enhance staff understanding of workforce system services. To the greatest extent possible online training methods are used to hold down costs and provide more immediate impact to DRS staff.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

Describe the State agency’s policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

The DRS Staff Development Section (SDS) oversees the needs assessment, development, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of all training programs offered within DRS. SDS has three full–time trainers and a program manager in addition to two support staff. SDS is responsible for providing training to DRS VR staff as well as coordinating training from other sources and maintaining the training data base which tracks the number of training hours for each staff person. The following section lists training courses provided by the Staff Development Section in the last year, as well as statewide conferences attended by DRS staff with financial support from DRS.

Training Provided by the DRS Staff Development Section Job Placement and Job Development Strategies; Case Progression and Documentation; Valuing Diversity in the Workplace; Conflict and Stress Management for Professionals; Working Effectively in Teams; Platinum Customer Service; Customer Service and Telephone Skills; Projecting a Professional Image; Sexual Harassment Prevention in the Work Place (re–titled The Respect Effect); Section 590 Subpart C: Training and Related Services (Webinar); Effective Communication & Conflict Management; Dealing with Difficult Behavior in the Workplace; Partnering with Autonomy Works (Webinar); The NET: A Model for Successful Employment Outcomes (Webinar); Team Building and Problem Solving; Case Notes: Styles, Structures and Time Management; Training Provided by External Training Resources Job Placement Skills; Social Security Benefits Training Conferences Supported by DRS Illinois Rehabilitation Association; Illinois Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired; Illinois Association of Agencies and Community Organizations for Migrant Advocacy; Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees; Latino Mental Health Conference;
Statewide Transition Conference. Ongoing Staff Development Training Needs Assessment. In 2013 DRS conducted an online training needs assessment survey for all field office staff, including supervisors, counselors and case coordinators. Staff were asked about their own training needs as well as their perception of training needs for individuals working in other field positions. The top training requests for field office supervisors was in the area of stress management and dealing with difficult people, as well as disciplinary procedures. For case coordinators, the top requests were in the areas of teambuilding and customer service. For VR counselors the top requests for training were in the areas of counseling skills, caseload management and time management. DRS is developing a plan to prioritize the training requests, develop training events when possible and arrange for external training providers if needed. DRS provides ongoing training to staff in all areas of counseling, including counseling and guidance. All staff are required to take a five–day New Employee Orientation training course that focuses on the role of the counselor in the counseling relationship. A major emphasis is placed on role–playing various situations where counseling and guidance skills are used. Another major emphasis is on assessment of the individual’s rehabilitation needs, beginning with the initial interview. Placement skills are emphasized in training activities including regional meetings held annually, as well as on–site training in field offices. Training focuses on job development skills, communication with employers and preparing customers for job interviews. Job placement assistance is also provided to counselors through relationships with Employment Resource Specialist (ERS) staff located around the state. Each field office has an ERS assigned to assist counselors with job placement concerns. ERS staff can also act as a companion to the counselor on the computerized case management system, sharing information and making case notes to promote effective job placement. DRS makes training available in rehabilitation technology to all staff. DRS employs rehabilitation technology specialists who provide on–site consultation to counselors and assist them in developing plans for provision of rehabilitation technology to VR customers. DRS also has contractual staff that focus on rehabilitation technology issues and provide on–site training and consultation. DRS works in conjunction with the Illinois Assistive Technology Project, the state’s AT grant recipient, to promote understanding of rehabilitation technology needs and identification of technology resources. DRS makes use of the rehabilitation technology program at the University of Illinois at Chicago as both a training resource and a service provider for VR customers.

B. ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE

Dissemination of Research Materials to Staff. The staff development section operates a small library with books and video materials available on numerous topics related to disability and rehabilitation counseling. These materials are distributed to field staff upon request. In the last year the library has added new materials related to job search, job skills and career choice materials to enhance the rehabilitation counselor’s access to research materials. DRS makes use of its intranet system to provide linkages to research sources and other new information relating to the field of rehabilitation. DRS also maintains a close relationship with the Illinois Rehabilitation Association (IRA) including providing assistance in sponsoring the IRA annual conference. The IRA conference features presentations on new developments in the rehabilitation field including presentations on research from university professionals as well as rehabilitation practitioners. In addition, key categories of staff such as rehabilitation counselors for the deaf and mental health specialist counselors, participate in regional and statewide groups that share current research relevant to their fields of study. The DRS initiative on for individual placement and support services for persons with mental illness involves sharing research findings in a structured way with staff. Training Technology As noted above, a
major emphasis in DRS has been the effort to obtain up–to–date interactive technology to facilitate training events and limit time and expense associated with travelling to training events. DRS has made use of an RSA quality grant to purchase video equipment, laptop computers and microphones to establish the capability for two–way interactive video in all offices across the state. Testing of the technology has been successful and training events will be scheduled soon using the equipment. In 2014 DRS established a contract to develop online training modules in key areas of VR casework. The idea is that counselors will be able to take training on key topics and improve their knowledge of important concepts directly from their office computer. A quiz would follow each session, with the scores reported to a data base maintained by the training unit staff. The first two modules were tested in 2015 and were received positive evaluations from VR staff. DRS has also worked to implement standard webinar training events with visual presentation of materials along with spoken narration. Real time captioning is available as needed as an accommodation for webinar users. The staff being trained can interact with the presenter by responding to questions (“polling”) and by texting in questions. All webinar training events are followed up with an online participant survey that provides feedback on the training. DRS has used this methodology over 1505 times in the last two years months to provide relatively brief but important training updates to VR staff. Staff response to webinar technology for training has been very positive and DRS anticipates utilizing this format more often in the coming year.

5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

Communication with Diverse Populations DRS maintains rehabilitation counseling staff with expertise in communicating with diverse populations. A group of Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCDs) are employed throughout the state. These individuals are fluent in sign language and conversant with deaf culture, and provide the full range of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals who are deaf. The Bureau of Blind Services employs rehabilitation counselors and rehabilitation instructors who are professionally qualified to provide rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. DRS strongly encourages the use of Braille as part of training for individuals who are blind. In addition, rehabilitation counselors and rehabilitation case coordinators are employed who are qualified to communicate with individuals whose primary language is Spanish. Staff are tested in order to qualify for bilingual positions. DRS also works with individuals whose primary language is one other than English, Spanish or sign language. While the numbers of such individuals is relatively small, it is equally important to be able to communicate effectively with them about their rehabilitation needs. The Illinois Department of Human Services maintains a computerized resource directory, which includes information on translation services for a variety of languages, including Polish, Vietnamese and Arabic among others. DRS counselors can link with these resources to provide translation services. DRS has also piloted the use of a telephone–based translation service which can provide instant translations in over 100 languages and which requires only the use of two telephones. When professional translators are not available, DRS works with family members or volunteer translators from community or religious organizations who can assist the individual.
6. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Coordination of the CSPD and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Relationship to IDEIA: DRS staff provide services annually to thousands of young people with disabilities, most of whom receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Approximately 10,000 young people participate in the Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP), which provides work experience during the high school years. The Next Steps program provides advocacy training to parents of students with disabilities. Part of the Next Steps training program includes providing information on the importance of transition planning. DRS staff who work with high school students participate in training offered by the Illinois State Board of Education and its Transition Systems Change project. DRS maintains an administrative liaison position with the State Board to facilitate communication about transition issues, including available training options. Also, DRS has staff who serve on the Education of Students with Disabilities Advisory Committee. There is no direct connection between DRS training efforts and the personnel development plan under IDEA. DRS staff are closely involved in the statewide network of Transition Planning Councils (TPCs), which consist of rehabilitation and education professionals, as well as employers and school administrators. The purpose of the TPCs is to facilitate transition from school to work and to identify local issues that affect transition. DRS staff are involved with the schools in their communities and frequently attend training events sponsored by schools.
1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:

A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

Needs of Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities. The most recent needs assessment survey was conducted in FY2013 and covered the period FY2011 through FY2013. A supplemental survey in FY2014 addressed transition services for youth with disabilities.

DRS plans to conduct an online needs assessment survey in 2016. It is anticipated that the survey will be completed and results reported to RSA in the first quarter of FY2016. This survey will place a closer emphasis on transition career services and pre-employment transition services as defined under WIOA, including the degree to which these services are coordinated with transition services provided under IDEA. Stakeholders will be asked to identify additional opportunities for work-based learning experiences, especially those that can be coordinated with other core partners in the workforce system.
DRS collected survey data on individuals with a primary disability of intellectual disability, mental illness, and brain injury since these individuals are very likely to be classified as having a most significant disability, and constitute the large majority of individuals who receive supported employment services. Survey results indicated that the five highest rated needs for this group were: Vocational training; Supported employment; Job coaching; Job creation; and Job seeking skills training. Respondents in this group rated both supported employment and job coaching higher than other respondents, while rating job creation somewhat lower. DRS also examined data on individuals who indicated multiple disabilities in the online survey, in comparison to those who indicated only one disability. For the multi–disability group, the five highest rated service needs were: Vocational training; Supported employment; Assistive technology; Career exploration; and Benefits planning. For the single disability group, the five highest rated service needs were: Job creation; Customized employment; Career exploration; On–the–job training; and Vocational training. The multi–disability group was the only sub–group in the analysis to give a high rating to assistive technology, and one of the few to rate benefits planning highly. DRS believes it has the capacity to respond to the service needs indicated in the survey. First, through ongoing efforts to promote supported employment services, including the recent significant increase in payment rates to providers. DRS also works with community providers to support job coaching as a standalone support service outside the framework of supported employment. In addition, DRS has a strong commitment to provision of assistive technology equipment and services. DRS also has provided training to staff on the latest trends in Social Security benefits planning. DRS maintained a full–time benefits planning specialist during the recent discontinuation of WIPA grants, and expects to provide a wider array of services when WIPA funding is restored.

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

Needs of Individuals with Disabilities Who Are Minorities The DRS online survey conducted in FY2013 enabled analysis by minority status. Minority respondents had a greater sense of urgency, with an average “need now” rating across all items of 20.7 percent, compared to 15.7 for white respondents. The average weighted need score was also higher for minority customers, at 25.3 compared to 22.1 for white respondents. For minority respondents, the five highest rated service needs were: Job creation; Benefits planning; College support; Customized employment; and Supported employment. It is interesting to note that only the minority respondent sub–group rated support for college as a top five need, perhaps a reflection of overall economic need among this group. For white respondents, the five highest rated service needs were: Vocational training; Job creation; Job seeking skills training; Supported employment; and Career exploration. In this case three of the items were pre–employment in focus—career exploration, vocational training and job seeking skills training. As noted above, DRS will be expanding its options for benefits planning services in the next year. Also, DRS has identified a key goal of expanding college training services at both the university and community college levels for the upcoming year. DRS also is continuing its outreach efforts to the Latino and Asian–American communities, which have the highest rate of population growth of any groups in Illinois. In 2014 DRS initiated an outreach effort aimed primarily at minority youth with disabilities which is expected to have an impact on the number of minority individuals served in the VR program as well as the number achieving employment outcomes.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

Needs of Individuals Who Have Been Unserved or Underserved by the VR Program The online needs survey conducted in FY2013 used a self–report method for identify disability. DRS was able to identify only five individuals who reported both a vision and hearing disability and therefore could potentially be classified as deaf–blind.
This is an insufficient number of responses for meaningful analysis. However, DRS maintains an ongoing effort to identify and serve deaf–blind individuals. This effort is coordinated by the DRS deaf services unit with the assistance of the Bureau of Blind Services. DRS works with audiologist and vision professionals to develop referrals for VR services. In the last four years the number of deaf–blind individuals served at the Chicago training facility for the blind has grown significantly, as has the overall number of deaf–blind persons served in VR. While the overall number of deaf–blind individuals remains small, DRS believes that it will continue to increase the proportion of those individuals who receive VR services through its outreach efforts. DRS is involved in an ongoing effort to implement a system of individual placement services (IPS) programs, formerly known as evidence–based supported employment programs, for individuals with serious mental illness. The IPS model is designed to provide employment services that are tailored to the specific needs of this population, which have traditionally been underserved by VR programs nationally. To further the DRS commitment to the IPS model, DRS intends to continue gradual expansion of IPS services as funding allows. DRS is actively engaged through its transition services in working with individuals with autism and autism spectrum disorder. In the last decade the number of students in special education with these diagnoses has grown significantly, which has led to a gradual increase of autism cases in the DRS VR program. DRS works with advocacy groups and service providing agencies to identify service options and job placement strategies that will meet the needs of this group.

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

The DRS online need survey conducted in FY2013 did not directly address the workforce system as such. It is likely that people with disabilities have not yet come to view the one–stop centers as a focus for receiving services. What is clear from the survey data is that people with disabilities want direct assistance in identifying employment options, whether that assistance is labeled as “job creation”, “customized employment” or “career exploration”. It becomes the duty of DRS to make the connection between customer needs and the services available from workforce centers.

Within the last year DRS has begun to cooperate more extensively with the state Title I agency around disability initiatives from that agency funded by the Dept. of Labor. This involves local area cooperation and in many cases joint enrollment of individuals in Title I and VR services. The extent to which this model will be expanded beyond these pilot areas is currently unknown, but to date the level of cooperation has been very helpful in serving the individuals identified.

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

DRS needs assessment survey data conducted in FY2013 as well as the supplemental survey conducted in FY2014 continues to show a high level of support for transition services, although the specific types of services are often not specified. The distinctions made in WIOA between students with disabilities and youth with disabilities indicate a need to a more detailed examination of service options for these age groups. Pre–employment transition services are available to many students with disabilities through the Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP), a longstanding cooperative effort by DRS and local school systems, serving around 10,000 students each year. DRS also serves another 1,000 students outside the STEP framework through direct engagement with a DRS rehabilitation counselor and often with a community rehabilitation partner.
The area requiring expansion going forward is the provision of work–based learning experiences for youth with disabilities who have exited school. The primary option for this population at present has been through referral to a community rehabilitation program agency for assistance with job placement. Through its partnership with workforce entities and its business engagement strategy, DRS plans to expand the number and variety of work–based experiences to youth with disabilities, as well as direct job placement opportunities. It is unclear at present how quickly the business relationships can be developed, or how receptive employers will be to certain work–based experience options.

However, this is clearly an approach that must be explored in depth without regard to immediate employment results. The best estimate is that it will take two years before significant growth is seen in the use of work–based options, with gradual growth in employment outcomes for the youth population.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

DRS believes that the system of community rehabilitation programs in the state is adequate to meet the needs of vocational rehabilitation program customers. Very few comments were made in the online needs assessment conducted in FY2013 regarding a need to establish or expand the CRP system. Some suggestions were made to expand non–vocational day habilitation programs, but that is not a service option appropriate for VR funding. DRS meets regularly with a statewide committee of CRP representatives (the Facility Advisory Council) to improve services provided by CRPs in Illinois.

3. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT.

In 2014 DRS conducted an online needs assessment survey that supplemented the survey conducted in 2013. The 2014 survey was concerned specifically with services for transition age youth with disabilities and involved both rating the relative need of services required by transition age youth as well as descriptions of specific program options under consideration by DRS.

There were 10 services rated on a 7–point scale, where 1 represented the lowest level of need and 7 represented the highest level of need. For each item, a percentage of high ratings (either 6 or 7 on a 7–point rating scale) was computed, indicating the level to which respondents indicated that the service was needed more urgently. The items and the respective scores are listed below:

Internship Opportunities: Short term work opportunities that provide experience with a particular occupation or business 58.2

Customized Employment: Help finding a job or starting a business based on your individual strengths and needs 72.0

Supported Employment: On–the–job supports to help you retain a job 72.3
Self-Employment: Help planning for and starting your own business 18.2

Vocational Training: Learning new skills that will lead to getting a job 75.8

On-the-Job Training: Training at a job where you learn while getting paid to work 75.8

Job Placement Services: Help in finding a job that matches your skills 81.1

Benefits Planning Services: Help to manage Social Security benefits and plan to begin working 50.6

Support for College Expenses: Financial support to help pay for tuition, books and housing 42.0

Assistive Technology Services and Support: Special equipment and electronic devices to help with reading, speaking or using a computer 41.0

Responses to the 2014 survey were consistent with those received in 2013. What might be classified as typical VR services received high need ratings, including job placement (81.1 percent high need) vocational training (75.8 percent) and on-the-job training (75.8 percent). High ratings were also received for supported employment (72.3 percent) and customized employment (72.0 percent), the latter a relatively new service in VR. As was the case in the 2013 survey, college training (42 percent high need) and assistive technology (41 percent) were rated relatively low in terms of need. An item on self-employment was included in the 2014 survey that was not used in 2013. This received a very low overall rating, with only 18.2 percent indicating a high need for this service.
K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(b)). Describe:

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES;

DRS uses disability data from the U.S. Census Bureau to estimate the number of potentially eligible individuals in the State. Using the most recent Census data on disability prevalence and the most recent estimate of the Illinois population, DRS estimates that there are 679,900 individuals with disabilities in the state aged 16 to 64 who are potentially eligible for the VR program. Of that number, DRS estimates that there are 530,400 who would qualify for services under the DRS order of selection policy, and 149,000 who would not be likely to meet the State’s order of selection policy. In addition, DRS estimates that there are 77,200 individuals with disabilities who are potentially eligible for VR services under Title VI, Part B.

Of the 530,400 likely to qualify under the policy, DRS estimates that there are 183,000 who would be in the most significant disability category, 122,400 who would be in the very significant disability category, and 224,500 that would be in the significant disability category.
2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

In the VR program, DRS estimates that 44,500 individuals will be served in FY2017.

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

In the supported employment program, DRS estimates that 150 individuals, all in the most significant disability category, will be served in FY2017.

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION;

In the VR program, DRS estimates that 22,015 individuals in the most significant disability category will be served in FY2017, along with 18,140 individuals in the very significant disability category and 4,345 individuals in the significant disability category. No services will be provided to individuals in the category of individual with a disability.

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

DRS estimates that there are potentially 149,000 individuals who would be eligible for VR services but not be in an open category of the order of selection policy.

4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

IN FY2017, DRS estimates that $109,000,000 federal VR funds will be available, along with $30,000,000 in non-federal funds for a total program budget of $139,000,000. With an estimated 44,500 individuals to be served this equals $3,124 in total funds per person served, with $2,450 in federal funds and $674 in non-federal funds.

For the most significant disability category, the average total cost is expected to be $3,771, with $2,957 in federal funds and $814 in non-federal funds. Total spending for the most significant disability category is estimated to be $83,021,450, where $65,102,930 are federal funds and $17,918,520 are non-federal funds.

For the very significant disability category, the average total cost is expected to be $2,615, with $2,015 in federal funds and $564 in non-federal funds. Total spending for the very significant disability category is estimated to be $47,429,150, where $37,192,517 are federal funds and $10,236,633 are non-federal funds.

For the significant disability category, the average total cost is expected to be $1,968, with $1,543 in federal funds and $425 in non-federal funds. Total spending for the significant disability category is estimated to be $8,549,400, where $6,704,183 are federal funds and $1,845,217 are non-federal funds.
No services will be provided to individuals in the category of individual with a disability and no funds will be expended
L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The designated State unit must:

1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

The goals and priorities in this Plan were jointly developed and agreed to by DRS and the State Rehabilitation Council. Any revisions to the goals and priorities were jointly reviewed and agreed to by DRS and the SRC.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

Goal 1: Competitive Integrated Employment Outcomes The expected performance for the current year is 5,900 competitive integrated employment outcomes. DRS plans to increase the number of competitive integrated employment outcomes achieved each year, beginning with 6,150 in PY2016, then 6,335 in PY2017, 6,525 in PY2018 and 6,720 in PY2019.

Goal 2: Median Earnings Two Quarters After Program Exit The best estimate of current performance is median quarterly earnings of $2,343. DRS plans to increase the median earnings achieved by individuals exiting the VR program to $2,460 in PY2016, $2,595 in PY2017, $2,750 in PY2018 and $2,930 in PY2019.

Goal 3: Employment Retention at Two Quarters After Program Exit The best estimate of current performance is 49.1 percent for all persons exiting the VR program. DRS plans to increase the employment retention percentage to 52.5 in PY2016, 55.0 in PY2017, 57.5 in PY2018 and 60.0 in PY2019.

Goal 4: Employment Retention at Four Quarters After Program Exit The best estimate of current performance is 45.7 percent for all persons exiting the VR program. DRS plans to increase the employment retention percentage to 48.0 in PY2016, 50.0 in PY2017, 52.5 in PY2018 and 55.0 in PY2019.

Goal 5: Educational Achievement This measure includes all program participants who earn a secondary diploma, post-secondary degree or other credential while participating in the program of within one year after program exit. The best estimate of current performance is 5,050 individuals meeting this criterion, with 4,250 completing a secondary diploma, 600 earning a post-secondary degree and 200 earning some other type of credential. DRS plans to increase the number of people making educational achievements to 5,260 in PY2016, 5,470 in PY2017, 5,680 in PY2018 and 5,900 in PY2019.

Goal 6: Post-Secondary Training Skill Gains This measure includes all program participants who are engaged in post-secondary training leading to a degree or credential and who are making measurable skills gains during the program year. The best estimate of current performance is 2,500 individuals meeting this criterion. DRS plans to increase the number of people achieving measurable
skills gains in postsecondary training to 2,650 in PY2016, 2,800 in PY2017, 2,950 in PY2018 and 3,150 in PY2019.

Goal 7: Students with Disabilities Exiting Into Postsecondary Training This is a measure of the number of students with disabilities who graduate from high school and enter post–secondary training programs within the first year after leaving school. The best estimate of current performance is that about 4,000 students exit DRS STEP services each year and about 700 enter post–secondary training. DRS plans to increase the number of students participating in post–secondary training to 750 in PY2016, 825 in PY2017, 900 in PY2018 and 1,000 in PY2019.

Goal 8: Establish a Business Engagement Team within DRS In PY2016 DRS plans to establish a business engagement team, consisting of employment resource specialists, rehabilitation counselors and field office supervisors. The team will establish new relationships with at least 20 employers and achieve 50 employment outcomes for VR customers at those businesses. DRS will work in conjunction with the Job Driven VR Technical Assistance Center to develop a business engagement strategy and provide training to participating staff to increase the effectiveness of their engagement with employers.

Goal 9: Continue Expansion of Innovative Program Options In PY2016 DRS plans to continue expansion of several innovative program options which have been evaluated following a set of pilot projects. These include customized employment services, individual placement and support (IPS) services for diverse populations, and Project Search sites. Evaluation of the pilot projects suggests that the majority of the projects have performed at a level sufficient to justify ongoing support through DRS VR funds.

Goal 10: Expand Performance Funding DRS has converted many of its community contracts to a performance basis in the last four years. DRS plans to continue to process of converting contracts for job placement and supported employment to a performance basis, achieving a level of 100 percent performance–based contracts with community vendors not later than PY2018.

3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

Goals and priorities contained in this Plan are based on an analysis of DRS performance on program standards, as well as other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including reports from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted by RSA under Section 107 of the Act. In addition, the goals and priorities reflect the most recently completed statewide needs assessment and are based on the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA.

A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

Goals and priorities contained in this Plan are based on an analysis of DRS performance on program standards, as well as other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including reports from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted by RSA under Section 107 of the Act. The goals and priorities are based on the most recently completed statewide needs assessment.
B. THE STATE’S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

Goals and priorities contained in this Plan are based on an analysis of DRS performance on program standards, as well as other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including reports from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted by RSA under Section 107 of the Act. The goals and priorities are based on the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA.

C. OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.

Goals and priorities contained in this Plan are based on an analysis of DRS performance on program standards, as well as other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including reports from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted by RSA under Section 107 of the Act.
Describe:

1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:

A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES.

The priority of categories to receive VR services under the DRS order of selection policy are:

1. Individuals determined to have the most significant disabilities;

2. Individuals determined to have very significant disabilities; 3. Individuals determined to have significant disabilities; and 4. Individuals determined to have disabilities.

For FY2017 the categories of most significant disability, very significant disability and significant disability will be open to services, unless a determination is made by the DRS Director that circumstances require a change in the categories open to service.

The priority categories established under this rule are based solely on the definition of “individual with a significant disability” defined in the Rehabilitation Act (section 7 (21) (A ) and in regulations (34CFR361.36(d)(2) and 34CFR361.5(b)(31)).

Categories of Eligible Individuals

a) Pursuant to the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 USC 701 et seq.), DHS–DRS has established the following Order of Selection for the priority of provision of services to eligible individuals which counselors must follow when purchasing services for customers:

1) those individuals determined to have the most significant disabilities;

2) those individuals determined to have very significant disabilities;

3) those individuals determined to have significant disabilities; and

4) individuals determined to have disabilities.

b) For the purposes of administering services under the order of selection, the Director of DHS–DRS will determine at the beginning of each fiscal year, or more often as necessary, which of the categories under subsection (a) will be open for service.

c) Eligible individuals in a closed category under subsection (a) may choose to be placed on a waiting list for services.

Criteria for Disability, Significant Disability, Very Significant Disability and Most Significant Disability
Documentation of the determination that an individual has a most significant disability, a very significant disability, a significant disability or a disability must be in the individual's VR case file, as well as documentation concerning the evaluation of his or her rehabilitation potential.

a) Prior to determining the significance of an individual's disability, it must be determined that he or she:

1) has a disability, or a combination of disabilities, that causes a substantial physical or mental impairment that is similar, but not limited to, the following list of disabilities:

A) amputation,
B) arthritis,
C) autism,
D) blindness,
E) burn injury,
F) cancer,
G) cerebral palsy,
H) cystic fibrosis,
I) deafness,
J) head injury,
K) heart disease,
L) hemiplegia,
M) hemophilia,
N) respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction,
O) intellectual disability,
P) mental illness,
Q) multiple sclerosis,
R) muscular dystrophy,
S) muscular–skeletal disorders,
T) neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy),

U) paraplegia,

V) quadriplegia (and other spinal cord conditions),

W) sickle cell anemia,

X) specific learning disabilities, or

Y) end stage renal failure disease;

2) has a disability, or a combination of disabilities, that seriously limits his or her functional capacities, as listed in Section 553.150 of this Part; and

3) requires VR services over an extended period of time.

b) If an individual meets the requirements of Section 553.140(a), then the following criteria must be met to determine the significance of his or her disability:

1) To be considered an individual with a most significant disability, he or she must be an individual who has a disability that seriously limits three or more of his or her functional capacities and who requires multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

2) To be considered an individual with a very significant disability, he or she must have a disability that seriously limits two of his or her functional capacities, and must require multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

3) To be considered an individual with a significant disability, he or she must have a disability that seriously limits one of his or her functional capacities and must require multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

4) To be considered an individual with a disability, he or she must have a disability that results in an impediment to employment but which does not seriously limit his or her functional capacities.

c) An individual who has been determined eligible for disability benefits pursuant to Title II (SSDI) or Title XVI (SSI) of the Social Security Act is considered to be presumed eligible for VR services and an individual with a significant disability, unless the analysis of his or her functional limitations and service needs, as described above, place the individual into a higher category of the order of selection.

Determination of Serious Limitation to Functional Capacities

a) For the purpose of determination of the degree of significance of disability, functional capacities shall include:

1. mobility – the physical ability of an individual to move from place to place and move the body into certain positions. This includes such activities as: walking, climbing, kneeling, stooping, sitting, standing, and similar activities;
2. **self-care** – the ability of an individual to perform activities related to his or her health and hygiene. This includes such activities as: grooming, bathing, eating, housekeeping, medical management, and money management;

3. **self-direction** – the ability of an individual to organize, control and regulate his or her own personal, social, and work life. This includes such activities as: maintaining schedules and routines, following directions and established rules, organizing activities for oneself, and adjusting to changing circumstances;

4. **work skills** – the ability of an individual to demonstrate skills necessary to perform jobs that exist in the current employment market, regardless of demand for the particular occupation or the individual’s prior work experience. This includes such activities as: learning and maintaining work skills, cooperating with others in a work setting, using adequate decision making and problem solving skills, and using academic skills commonly required in the workplace;

5. **work tolerance** – the ability of an individual to consistently and adequately perform a job based on the physical, emotional, environmental, and psychological demands of a specific work environment. This includes such activities as: maintaining performance on the job regardless of changes in environment such as cold and heat, demonstrating the strength and endurance to perform the job in question, and working the schedule typical of other employees in the same job;

6. **interpersonal skills** – the ability of an individual to establish and maintain appropriate relationships with other individuals in the work place. This includes such activities as: engaging in necessary work–related communications, demonstrating behavior that is appropriate and acceptable in the work environment, cooperating with others in a team setting, and showing understanding and tact in dealing with others; and

7. **communication** – the ability to convey and receive information efficiently and effectively. This includes such activities as: hearing and understanding ordinary spoken language; making one’s self understood in ordinary conversation; writing or printing short notes and communications; and reading and correctly interpreting short notes, signs, and instructions.

b) A serious limitation to a functional capacity shall exist when the rehabilitation counselor determines that the customer, because of his or her disability, has functional limitations in performing the major components of the activity or activities listed in subsections (a)(1) through (7) or needs accommodation to perform the activity.

c) The rehabilitation counselor shall use the criteria of consistency and substantiality when evaluating the degree of limitation to functional capacity. Consistency means that the individual’s disability always or almost always limits the individual’s functioning. Substantiality means the individual’s disability has a major, significant impact on functioning and that the individual cannot perform the activity or finds it very difficult to perform the activity.

**B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER.**

Illinois DRS has operated under an order of selection since 1979. Illinois changed its order of selection policy in April 2013. The overall purpose of the policy is to reflect the priorities of the agency and provide for an equitable distribution of resources to individuals with most significant disabilities.
C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS.

In PY2016 DRS expects to serve 44,500 individuals. It is expected that the total number will be distributed as follows: persons with a most significant disability: 22,015; persons with a very significant disability: 18,140; and persons with a significant disability: 4,345.

For PY2016 DRS expects to achieve 6,450 rehabilitated closures. It is expected that the total number will be distributed as follows: persons with a most significant disability: 3,325; persons with a very significant disability: 2,825; and persons with a significant disability: 300.

D. THE TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER.

The time period for the goals described above is Program Year 2016, beginning July 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2017.

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

The DRS order of selection policy establishes priority for individuals with a most significant disability. Presently this is one of three categories of the order of selection policy now open for service. Financial estimates allow for services to individuals in all three categories to take place during PY2016. Consistent with longstanding policy, if financial circumstances change, other categories of the order of selection policy will be closed to services until only the most significant category remains open, at which time all new cases will be individuals in that category. It is not anticipated that such financial circumstances will arise as no similar situation has taken place in more than a decade. However the policy in place is sufficient to ensure that individuals in the most significant disability category will have priority going forward in such an event.

2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT.

DRS does not plan to implement an exemption to the order of selection process based on specific service needs in order to retain employment.
N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS.

1. SPECIFY THE STATE’S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

For PY2016, the Supported Employment Program (SEP) has set forth the following goals using Title VI, Part B funds. 1. Serve customers recently placed into supported employment in a manner consistent with federal regulations, with an emphasis on moving as many individuals as possible into natural supports at the conclusion of ongoing support services. 2. Continue to expand the scope of those who receive services to include persons who are deaf–blind, persons with traumatic brain injuries, persons who are mentally ill, persons with significant hearing impairments and other persons with the most significant disabilities. 3. Develop new mechanisms for funding paid extended services, including cooperative agreements with other state agencies and local units of government. 4. Evaluate the most effective means of achieving employment outcomes for individuals traditionally served in supported employment services. 5. Ensure that no less than 50 percent of the Title VI Part B grant funds are used for long–term support services to youth with disabilities. For PY2016, DRS will serve and employ 150 persons in supported employment utilizing Title VI Part B funds. In FFY2015 DRS served 166 individuals in supported employment using Title VI Part B funds and an additional 1,126 using other funds.

2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:

A. THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND

DRS has developed a contract monitoring mechanism to ensure that Title VI Part B funds are available to youth with disabilities and that at least 50 percent of grant funds are available to individuals in that category. In addition a reporting system has been developed to ensure that no individual participates in services funded with Title VI part B funds for longer than 48 months.

Activities to be carried out for individuals receiving extended services include provision of ongoing support services at the job site or at another location, facilitation of natural supports at the job site, and regular contact with employers and other individuals supporting the worker in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement. Other supports will be made available as needed, including assistive technology where appropriate.

B. HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

DRS has also worked with the state developmental disabilities agency and the state mental health agency to explore funding options for youth with the most significant disabilities who may exhaust support services utilizing Title VI Part B funds. It is expected that most individuals in that category will be eligible for services funded through one of the Medicaid waivers operated by those agencies. The Illinois Employment First effort is a mechanism to support additional cooperation between VR
funded and Medicaid waiver funded employment programs for people with most significant disabilities. DRS and the state agency serving individuals with intellectual disabilities have agreed in principle to facilitate referrals of individuals requiring longer term paid supports. DRS is also committed to continuing expansion of customized employment services as an option for youth with the most significant disabilities. In 2015 DRS was able to utilize one–time funds to create pilot projects for customized employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities, and has cooperated with the state developmental disabilities agency on customized employment projects as well as staff training on application of customized employment concepts.
O. STATE’S STRATEGIES

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

DRS is pursuing several strategies to continually increase the number of employment outcomes, including: development of a business engagement strategy; establishment of stronger partnerships with local workforce boards; increasing business partnerships through the NET and other approaches; providing job placement training to all VR counselors; continuing an emphasis on establishing performance based contracts with community provider agencies; providing personal organization training to VR counselors; establishing outreach efforts to increase referrals to the VR program; and implementation of customized employment methodologies. DRS is following three main strategies to increase median earnings. The first is to increase the number of individuals enrolled in university and community college programs. These individuals have higher earnings than those with less education. A second strategy is to identify individuals with work experience who may benefit from return-to-work services through the VR program. DRS has one community provider contract that focuses on return-to-work and it has higher than average earnings for the individuals it serves. The third strategy is expanded participation in the CSAVR Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP). Community college enrollment has increased significantly in the last four years. In addition to supporting degree programs, DRS will work with local workforce partners to ensure that certificate programs relating to expanding sectors are a focus for individuals seeking post-secondary vocational training. DRS intends to conduct outreach to rehabilitation hospitals, orthopedic clinics, physical therapy clinics and other professionals who are likely to be in contact with individuals who have disabilities and a work history but who are currently not working. DRS will work with the communications office to develop materials that will effectively communicate a message about how the VR program can benefit the individuals served by these professionals. The Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) is focused on individuals with work experience who are seeking employment with larger, corporate-style employers who have structured hiring processes and make use of online systems to identify job candidates. DRS staff have worked closely with the national TAP development team and currently have over 500 customers who have enrolled in the system. DRS is pursuing a number of activities relating to transition services. DRS is establishing contracts with community agencies to conduct outreach activities to identify minority individuals who may benefit from VR services. In addition DRS continues to develop its relationship with the Chicago Public Schools, the third largest school district in the United States. DRS anticipates that enrollment, particularly of minority youth, will be greatly increased through these efforts. A recent focus of activity has been on working with community rehabilitation agencies to identify work-based learning opportunities for CPS students. This has been an aspect of transition services in Chicago that was developing at a slow rate and it was determined that additional resources were needed. DRS intends to develop agreements with local workforce boards to increase participation of youth with disabilities in work-based learning experiences targeted at out-of-school youth. There is a substantial overlap between the DRS population of youth with disabilities and the Title I population defined as out-of-school youth. Employer engagement efforts directed at creation of work-based learning experiences for young people should benefit those in both service categories to the greatest extent possible. DRS has two approaches to expanding the number of business partnerships. The first is continuation of participation in the National Employment Team (the NET), an effort coordinated by
the national CSAVR team. The employers targeted through this effort are national or multi–state employers who are looking to use VR agencies as a resource in identifying potential job candidates. The second approach is the creation of a business engagement team based on a business engagement strategy. DRS is working with the job driven VR technical assistance center in developing this strategy and training staff in its implementation. The businesses target in this approach will be those identified through the sector analysis conducted as part of the State’s WIOA regional planning process. DRS intends to continue development of innovative program options, including customized employment and individual placement and support (IPS) services. One strategy is continued involvement with national technical assistance resources, including subject matter experts made available through the DOL Vision Quest program. To date this has proven to be a valuable resource in that it provides objective analysis and recommendations affecting a number of state agencies serving people with disabilities. DRS is also continuing its cooperative relationship with the Psychiatric Research Center in developing and evaluating program expansion of IPS services to individuals with intellectual disabilities as well as to youth with serious mental illness.

2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS.

DRS recognizes the importance of assistive technology services in meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities. It is the intention of DRS to provide a broad range of AT services at all stages of the rehabilitation process, and to make the services available on a statewide basis. Toward this end, DRS provides training to staff on AT services, both at the initial staff training and on an ongoing basis. DRS employs technology specialists and arranges for contractual staff to be available to work with VR counselors to identify customer needs, locate AT providers, write plans and provide AT services. Staff are available to provide on–site consultation with VR counselors as well as on–site evaluation of customer needs. DRS also has a central office purchasing specialist that works one–on–one with VR counselors to arrange purchasing of AT equipment and maximize use of VR funds. DRS also works closely with the Illinois Assistive Technology Project (the state AT grant recipient) to educate people with disabilities about AT products and services as well as demonstrate products that may be of use to individuals with disabilities. DRS provided a large award of ARRA funds to enable IATP to upgrade and modernize assistive technology supporting its services. DRS initiated the loan to own program for distribution of assistive technology equipment in order to provide necessary devices to VR customers in a more timely fashion. This effort involves making larger purchases of frequently used assistive technology devices and transferring them to a customer as needed, rather than initiating a separate purchase for each individual. This has significantly reduced the amount of time required to deliver assistive technology equipment to customers, enabling them to move forward with their service plan sooner.

3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM.

DRS recognizes that many groups do not have access to the VR program to the same degree as others. DRS has a number of strategies to address these needs and improve access.

Individuals with disabilities who are minorities are served by DRS at a rate that reflects their proportion of the state population. However it is acknowledged that minority individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, face additional barriers to
employment and access to the labor market. DRS works with community providers that have a strong connection to particular minority communities, including the African-American, Latino and Asian communities. Providers in these communities provide services in a culturally appropriate manner and have access to employment both within minority communities as well as in the general labor market. Recent expansion of contractual services with providers representing the Asian communities in the Chicago area have been particularly successful in increasing employment for that population. DRS also makes its services available to non-English speakers, either through employment of bilingual staff or through a translation service.

DRS employs specialist staff for services to deaf–blind individuals, a low–incidence disability with a high need for vocational assistance. DRS specialists work in consultation with VR counselors to provide services to deaf–blind customers, including training and job placement. DRS used ARRA funding in 2011 and 2012 to conduct two training events on deaf–blindness for counselors serving either blind or deaf specialty caseloads. The training events featured experts from the Helen Keller National Center, the primary resource in the US for deaf–blind services. In 2014 and 2015 DRS arranged for follow–up training events conducted by HKNC staff which involved DRS counselors and other staff serving deaf–blind individuals. DRS also seeks to improve response to underserved groups by providing training to improve staff knowledge of various disabilities. As part of the 2013 staff needs assessment training, a strong need was identified for the medical aspects of disability for VR counselors and supervisors. DRS is pursuing online training options in medical aspects as well as possibly arranging for an external training resource to meet this need. DRS continues in its efforts to implement a system of individual placement and support services (IPS) programs, formerly known as evidence–based supported employment programs, for individuals with serious mental illness. The IPS model is designed to provide employment services that are tailored to the specific needs of this population, which have traditionally been underserved by VR programs nationally. This has been a major undertaking involving extensive cooperation with the DHS Division of Mental Health, community providers, and university consultants. A number of new agencies have received placement contracts from DRS and a special evaluation process is underway. Fidelity reviews have proven to be a very strong tool for improving and shaping IPS services at the service provider level.

4. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES).

DRS is committed to improvement and expansion of services to students and youth with disabilities, building upon its existing strong level of support for that age group. For example, in the previous state fiscal year 52.6 percent of all persons served in the DRS VR program began receiving services prior to age 21, as were 42.4 percent of persons achieving a competitive employment outcome. Although this represents a high level of involvement, there is still room for improvement and achievement of greater levels of effectiveness. While a variety of pre–employment transition services are being provided through existing arrangements with third party providers, DRS intends to pursue new options for work based learning experiences outside the framework of the longstanding STEP effort. The business engagement process now underway is expected to identify internships and other learning experiences in growth sectors that would otherwise not be available to students with disabilities. DRS also believes that the ongoing expansion of its partnership with the Illinois Department of Commerce (the state Title I agency). One component is the set of Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) projects funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. These projects involve
a variety of approaches to providing work experiences to youth with disabilities. In addition, DRS and Commerce are partnering on a set of innovative youth projects that will involve joint funding of work experiences and other approaches to employment for youth with disabilities. At present the proportion of in school and out of school youth to be served is unknown, but it is anticipated that many of the individuals served with be students with disabilities. DRS has initiated an effort to provide supported employment services, including customized employment services where appropriate, to students with disabilities prior to their exiting high school. While such referrals have taken place in the past, the number of referrals was small and the level of coordination between DRS, the school and the community provider agency was limited. Data from the DRS case management system is being utilized to identify students likely to benefit from supported employment services with sufficient time prior to school exit to facilitate mutual service provision. DRS is also expanding the number of contract arrangements with centers for independent living to provide counseling on self-advocacy and development of independent living skills. A limited number of such arrangements has been in place for some time, but the new requirements under WIOA for these elements of pre–employment transition services has presented this category of service as an opportunity for expansion.

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

Illinois has a well–developed network of community rehabilitation programs across the state, as well as an active trade association for those organizations. DRS does not believe that new community rehabilitation programs need to be developed at this time. DRS remains in contact with these organizations through ongoing discussions with the Facility Advisory Council, which has a rotating membership of program directors, who meet regularly with DRS administrators. The program manager for contracts as well as the bureau chief for field services attends meetings. The VR Director is closely involved with discussions about CRP services, both with the trade association as well as individual CRP directors. DRS also has specific liaison relationships between VR counselors and community rehabilitation programs in their service area. In addition, DRS has project officers who monitor contracts with community rehabilitation programs and are very knowledgeable regarding the service capacity of the agencies and the needs of their customers. These organizational arrangements provide a high level of communication about service needs as they relate to community rehabilitation programs. DRS believes that community rehabilitation program agencies will continue to play an important part in the overall system of services in Illinois. DRS anticipates that the overall percentage of outcomes associated with CRPs will remain relatively stable, and that an increase in employment outcomes overall will mean an increase in employment outcomes associated with CRPs. While DRS continues to emphasize the need for counselors to pursue direct placements whenever possible, this does not mean a reduction in the number of outcomes associated with community provider agencies. Making effective use of both state and private resources is the most certain way to continue to achieve quality results for DRS customers.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

Increased median earnings. As noted elsewhere in this plan, DRS is following three main strategies to increase median earnings. The first is to increase the number of individuals enrolled in university and community college programs. These individuals have higher earnings than those with less education. A second strategy is to identify individuals with work experience who may benefit from return–to–work services through the VR program. DRS has one community provider contract that
focuses on return–to–work and it has higher than average earnings for the individuals it serves. The third strategy is expanded participation in the CSAVR Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP). Each of these approaches is designed to identify individuals with higher expected earnings and gradually increase the proportion of these individuals served by DRS. Increased employment retention. Employment retention is a function of an appropriate match between the job and the individual, as well as a satisfactory level of earnings. Full time work is associated with a higher level of employment retention than is part time work. Consequently DRS counselors are encouraged to emphasize full time work to the greatest extent possible for VR customers. DRS is also currently considering development of a contract bonus system for vendors that pays an additional amount when the customer achieves full time employment. Also as noted above, DRS is attempting to increase enrollment in university and community college programs. Individuals with that level of education are much more likely to engage in full time employment. Increased achievement of postsecondary education credentials. DRS is engaged in an effort to expand enrollment in university and community college programs. As this effort continues we should observe increased performance on the training–related WIOA measures. To improve data quality, DRS is making modifications to its online case management system. These changes will result in improved tracking of measurable skill gains and achievement of degrees and credentials by customers pursuing postsecondary training.

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

DRS will use a localized strategy for assisting other components of the workforce system in working effectively with persons with disabilities. As noted elsewhere, DRS staff serve as members of local workforce boards and have the capacity to focus attention on disability–related issues. Concerns specifically related to program accessibility will be addressed at the local level with support from the DRS central office rehabilitation technology unit. In addition to local staff resources DRS will reach out to independent living centers in responding to accessibility concerns. DRS will also work with its Title I agency to provide training to both DRS and local workforce staff on disability issues through webinars and other mechanisms. A key focus will be utilizing the Section 188 Disability Reference Guide developed by the DOL Office of Disability Employment Policy. This guide focuses on the concept of universal access and presents disability issues in the context of local workforce centers. DRS believes that training built around this resource will make a valuable contribution to program access for people with disabilities. DRS will also pursue a strategy of expanding methods of communication, including electronic and computer connections, between DRS offices and local workforce centers. DRS is working with the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership to develop an electronic means of making referrals between DRS and workforce centers, increasing program efficiency and accountability while reducing barriers to participation for VR customers. In addition state level plans are underway to enhance data sharing capability for all core workforce partners.

8. HOW THE AGENCY’S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

In the most recent DRS needs assessment survey, the five highest ranked needs, based on the weighted score were: Job creation; Vocational training; Supported employment; Career exploration; and Customized employment. Three of these are related to immediate employment concerns (job creation, supported employment and customized employment) while the others focus on pre–employment activities. With regard to career exploration, DRS believes that this service need is
adequately addressed through its transition services including STEP and other approaches to transition. Vocational training is a term with a wide range of meanings, but in the context of the survey refers to non–academic training leading to employment. The ongoing DRS community college initiative has greatly expanded the number of individuals participating in postsecondary vocational training through that mechanism. DRS is addressing expansion of supported employment in a number of ways. One is through exploration, along with the CRP stakeholder group, of new performance based payment options for supported employment services. Another is a concentrated effort to facilitate referrals of students with disabilities most likely to benefit from supported employment services while they are still enrolled in high school under an IEP. Another effort involves coordination with provider agencies also funded by the state developmental disabilities waiver program in an effort to identify individuals who are likely to benefit from VR funded supported employment services. DRS recently completed two pilot projects involving customized employment for persons with developmental disabilities. At present DRS is in the process of developing a funding mechanism for customized employment that is similar to but distinct from that for supported employment.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

DRS continues to solicit suggestions from staff and stakeholders about service needs that can be the focus of innovation and expansion activities. This process was used to develop new projects serving transition age youth, for example, as well as expansion of IPS services. To the extent possible, one–time funds were used as start–up funding for these new projects, with significantly lower performance expectations than for ongoing programs. These were considered to be pilot projects and were evaluated for effectiveness prior to conversion to standard contract formats. Projects which were consistent with agency priorities and which represented the possibility of long term benefit were selected for funding. These have focused on outreach to minority communities, services to transition age youth, and expansion of IPS programs. Efforts have been made to determine the likely course of the project after the initial start–up phase is concluded. A secondary effort has centered on effective marketing approaches in working with businesses and customers. DRS developed a short (1 minute 40 seconds) online video which is targeted at a general audience and which describes a variety of VR services and emphasizes options for making a referral to the DRS program. DRS believes this presentation is consistent with current communication patterns and presents a great opportunity for increasing referrals to the program.

C. OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

The major barrier to participation in the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment program for individuals with disabilities concerns access to services. Because these programs are targeted at individuals with disabilities, there is no general barrier to participation on the basis of disability status. Rather, specific barriers arise when an individual is unable to participate in a program or communicate his or her needs to program staff. DRS provides a variety of access methods to individuals with disabilities, including the use of Braille and large print, sign language, computer assisted real time captioning and other specialized assistive technology. All DRS office locations are physically accessible, as are all program locations and public meeting sites. Individuals who do not speak English are provided with translation services in order to participate in the vocational rehabilitation program. Every effort is made to eliminate these types of barriers to participation.
P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

Describe:

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

The following goals were achieved in FY2015. Goal 6: Community College Enrollment. DRS will increase the number of individuals enrolled in community colleges pursuing a degree or credential to 1,000 in FY2015. Results: A total of 1,387 community college cases were served in FY2015, above the target value of 1,000 cases. Goal 9: Expand Business Partnerships. In FY2015 DRS will increase the number of NET-related business partnerships by 25 percent over the number for FY2014. Results: This goal was achieved. The number of NET-related business partnerships was increased by 55 percent, well above the target value of 25 percent. Goal 13: Establish a Vocational Training and Entrepreneurship Program. In FY2015 DRS will establish a facility at the ICRE-Roosevelt center in Chicago that will train youth with disabilities from across Illinois in vocational skills that will lead to employment, higher education or starting a business owned by the individual. Results: This program, known as the Vocational Incubator Program (VIP) was initiated in FY2015. Goal 12: Expand IPS Services. In FY2015 DRS will establish IPS pilot projects in 16 new locations, including expansion of IPS service concepts to persons with developmental disabilities and youth with disabilities. Results: This goal was achieved with 16 new IPS projects initiated in FY2015.

Strategies contributing to achievement of these goals were varied. DRS initiated a “Community College Initiative” in 2011 as a means of encouraging counselors to use this as a post-secondary training option when appropriate for specific individuals. Increases in enrollment began slowly but gradually built up to the current level from fewer than 700 such cases in 2011. One factor was to concentrate on communication with community college disability services offices as a means of obtaining referrals and supporting student success. DRS has also participated in The NET efforts for a number of years and seen a continued growth in the number of business relationships established. This has involved working cooperative with national and state VR representatives, as well as providing training and support to DRS counselors most closely involved with the NET-related businesses. The entrepreneurship training program also was the result of several years of planning and working with other entities including the University of Illinois at Chicago’s assistive technology unit. The expansion of IPS programs is another example of an ongoing effort continuing to produce positive results. DRS has provided staff training and has utilized subject matter experts from the Dartmouth IPS center to build upon past success and maintain program quality.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

The following goals were not achieved in FY2015:
Goal 1: Employment Outcomes. DRS will increase the number of competitive employment outcomes to 5,750 in FY2015. Results: A total of 5,448 competitive employment outcomes were achieved, or 302 below the target value. Goal 2: Average Wages. DRS will increase the average hourly wage earned by individuals achieving a competitive employment outcome to $10.95 in FY2015. Results: Average wages for FY2015 were $10.42 per hour.

Goal 3: Average Hours Worked. DRS will increase the average hours worked per week by individuals achieving a competitive employment outcome to 28.5 in FY2015. Results: Average hours worked per week was 27.1 for FY2015. Goal 4: Rehabilitation Rate. DRS will increase the rehabilitation rate to 56.0 in FY2015. Results: The rehab rate was 52.1 or 3.9 lower than the target value. Goal 5: University Enrollment. DRS will increase the number of individuals pursuing a degree and enrolled in a university to 2,200 in FY2015. Results: A total of 1,629 university cases were served in FY2015, well below the 2,200 target value. Goal 8.1: In FY2015 DRS will increase the number of minority transition age youth receiving services by 750 compared to FY2014. Results: This goal was not achieved. The number of minority transition age youth was increased by 622, below the target value of 750 individuals. Goal 8.2: DRS will increase the number of transition graduates achieving employment outcomes within the first year of leaving school to 1,500 in FY2015. Results: This goal was not achieved, with 1,343 transition graduates achieving employment outcomes within a year of graduation, below the target value of 1,500 individuals.

Various factors contributed to the lack of success in achievement of these goals. The major limiting factor was vacancies in rehabilitation counselor positions. Although several positions were filled in FY2015 it is not expected that these new hires will be completely effective until they complete a period of training and supervision. Recent gains in productivity suggest that these individuals are now beginning to achieve better results in their second year of employment. Changes in agency leadership also contributed to lower productivity, both through retirements as well as individuals serving in an interim capacity while maintaining other roles in the agency. Also, in Illinois recovery from the national employment recession proceeded more slowly than in other states. While employment overall has grown in our state, the unemployment rate in 2016 continues to exceed the national average. It is expected that growth in employment outcomes will continue at a slow but steady rate in the next few years.

These projects were not implemented in FY2015 due to limited staff resources.

Goal 7: Return to Work Services. In FY2015 DRS will identify and serve 150 individuals seeking to return to work. Results: This project was not implemented in FY2015. Goal 8.3: In FY2015 DRS will work to improve the consistency and timeliness of service delivery to transition students through implementation of quality control procedures. Results: This project was not implemented in FY2015. Goal 10: Strategic Planning. In FY2015 DRS will work with the State Rehabilitation Council to complete a VR Strategic Plan that will provide direction for the program for the next five years. Results: This project was not implemented in FY2015. Goal 11: Enhance Workforce Partnerships. In FY2015 DRS will increase the number of VR customers receiving vocational training funded all or in part through WIA funds to 500. Of that number, at least 300 will achieve an industry-recognized credential as a result of participation in training. Results: This project was not implemented in FY2015.
2. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

During FY2015, the Supported Employment Program (SEP) has set forth the following goals using Title VI, Part B funds.

1. Serve customers recently placed into supported employment in a manner consistent with federal regulations, with an emphasis on moving as many individuals as possible into natural supports at the conclusion of ongoing support services. Results: This goal was achieved.

2. Continue to expand the scope of those who receive services to include persons who are deaf-blind, persons with traumatic brain injuries, persons who are mentally ill, persons with significant hearing impairments and other persons with the most significant disabilities. Results: This goal was not achieved. The majority of individuals served by DRS continue to be individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

3. Develop new mechanisms for funding paid extended services, including cooperative agreements with other state agencies and local units of government. Results: This goal was not achieved. While discussions are ongoing regarding possible funding options for extended services, no agreements were completed this year.

4. Evaluate the most effective means of achieving employment outcomes for individuals traditionally served in supported employment services. Results: This goal was not achieved.

For FY2015, DRS will serve and employ 175 persons in supported employment. Results: This goal was not achieved for FY2015. DRS served 166 individuals using Title VI Part B funds, slightly fewer than the target of 175 individuals. Also, DRS served 1,126 individuals in supported employment using other funds, well below the target of 1,400 individuals.
B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

DRS has faced a situation in the last five years where the number of individuals receiving supported employment services has declined substantially across the State. A number of factors have been examined to determine the causes of the situation but no single factor stands out. One issue has been apparent miscommunication with community providers about the distinctive features of supported employment with a defined service population. Another issue has been communication around job coaching as a separate support service for individuals participating in VR services, and supported employment as a comprehensive approach to serving individuals with the most significant disabilities. Another factor is a change made by DRS to its case management system to ensure that only individuals determined to have a most significant disability could participate in supported employment services.

3. THE VR PROGRAM’S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

Employment retention two quarters and four quarters after program exit. The best estimate of current performance on this measure is that 49.1 percent of individuals exiting the program (either successfully or unsuccessfully) were employed during the second quarter after program exit. In addition, 45.7 percent of individuals exiting the program were employed during the fourth quarter after program exit. Median earnings two quarters after program exit. The best estimate of current performance shows that the median quarterly earnings for individuals exiting the program was $2,343. Educational achievement This is a measure of the number of individuals who earn a secondary diploma or a post–secondary credential during program participation or within one year after program exit. The best estimate of current performance is that 5,050 individuals meet this criterion. DRS serves a large number of students with disabilities as well as individuals enrolled in university and community college programs. DRS estimates that 4,250 participants earned a secondary diploma while participating in the VR program, and that 800 individuals earned a degree or other post–secondary credential while participating in the program or within one year after program exit. Measurable Skill Gains This is a measure of the number of individuals enrolled in a post–secondary training program who are making progress documented by achievement of a credential or other evidence of skill gains, such as grades. The best estimate of current performance is that 2,500 individuals meet this criterion.

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED.

DRS initiated a limited number of innovation and expansion projects in the last year. DRS continued its assistive technology open–ended loan program in order to make commonly–used items of assistive technology equipment available to VR program customers as quickly as possible. DRS also worked with the state protection and advocacy authority to implement a pilot project to conduct outreach to youth with disabilities who were involved with the juvenile justice system. DRS also worked with two centers for independent living to conduct outreach to the Latino population in the Chicago metro area.
Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

Include the following:

1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

DRS has faced a situation in the last five years where the number of individuals receiving supported employment services has declined substantially across the State. A number of factors have been examined to determine the causes of the situation but no single factor stands out. One issue has been apparent miscommunication with community providers about the distinctive features of supported employment with a defined service population. Another issue has been communication around job coaching as a separate support service for individuals participating in VR services, and supported employment as a comprehensive approach to serving individuals with the most significant disabilities. Another factor is a change made by DRS to its case management system to ensure that only individuals determined to have a most significant disability could participate in supported employment services.

DRS is committed to reversing this trend and serving individuals in supported employment at a higher rate in the coming years. One planned step is to develop a performance–based funding mechanism for supported employment. The current system has been used for over 25 years and relies on an hourly–based rate that does not effectively align the interests of the provider, the customer and DRS. This is part of an overall State effort to develop performance–based and outcome–based funding for community services whenever possible. DRS is aware that most other state VR agencies have some form of performance–based funding for supported employment services. We believe that adopting a similar system will increase provider interest in participation and improve results for customers.

DRS is also committed to dedicating substantial resources to provision of supported employment services to youth with disabilities. For many years DRS has supplemented the Title VI Part B grant funds with VR grant funds for supported employment contracts. For most providers there was no distinction between the contracts based on funding. In 2015 DRS began utilization of Title VI Part B funds for supported employment customers younger than age 25, as well as more closely tracking the total number of months of supported employment services. Current data indicates that about 30 percent of individuals participating in supported employment are younger than age 25.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

For several years DRS has not had access to state general revenue funds to provide long–term extended services for individuals completing time–limited supported employment services, whether using Title VI Part B funds or VR grant funds. DRS has focused on developing natural supports in the workplace as a form of unpaid extended services for individuals completing supported employment services. Completion of the program is defined as reduction of paid on–the–job supports to the minimum possible level.

DRS intends to complete agreements with the state developmental disabilities agency and the state mental health agency to provide long–term extended supports for individuals who have completed
supported employment services through the VR program. In both cases there are likely to be state funded service options as well as Medicaid waiver program options for these individuals.
CERTIFICATIONS

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate: Division of Rehabilitation Services

Name of designated State agency: Illinois Department of Human Services

Full Name of Authorized Representative: James T. Dimas

Title of Authorized Representative: Secretary, Department of Human Services

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.** Yes

2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the designated State agency listed above agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; Yes

3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan*, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;** Yes

4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes

5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes

6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. Yes

7. The Authorized Representative listed above has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes
8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;  Yes

9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.  Yes

**FOOTNOTES**

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**Certification 1 Footnotes**

* Public Law 113-128.

** Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

**Certification 2 Footnotes**

* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

** No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

*** Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

**Certification 3 Footnotes**

* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

** Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in *** under Certification 2 footnotes

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE CERTIFICATIONS FROM THE STATE**
Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization: Illinois Department of Human Services

Full Name of Authorized Representative: James T. Dimas

Title of Authorized Representative: Secretary, Department of Human Services
SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)
(http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov
CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant’s Organization: Illinois Department of Human Services

Full Name of Authorized Representative: James T. Dimas

Title of Authorized Representative: Secretary, Department of Human Services

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html).
ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances: **The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

1. **PUBLIC COMMENT ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:**

   The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. **SUBMISSION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT:**

   The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. **ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN:**

   The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

   **A. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.**

   **B. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EITHER A STATE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OR STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(21) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.**

   The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable **(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council**


The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds: **No**

F. THE SHARED FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION OF JOINT PROGRAMS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: **No**

G. STATEWIDENESS AND WAIVERS OF STATEWIDENESS REQUIREMENTS, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: **Yes**

H. THE DESCRIPTIONS FOR COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(11) AND (24)(B); AND 606(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. ALL REQUIRED METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(6) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

J. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(7) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.


L. THE RESERVATION AND USE OF A PORTION OF THE FUNDS ALLOTTED TO THE STATE UNDER SECTION 110 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH
DISABILITIES, PARTICULARLY INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

M. THE SUBMISSION OF REPORTS AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES:

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

A. COMPLY WITH ALL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 101(A)(5)(D) AND (20) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. IMPOSE NO DURATION OF RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT AS PART OF DETERMINING AN INDIVIDUAL’S ELIGIBILITY FOR VR SERVICES OR THAT EXCLUDES FROM SERVICES UNDER THE PLAN ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO IS PRESENT IN THE STATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(12) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

C. PROVIDE THE FULL RANGE OF SERVICES LISTED IN SECTION 103(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AS APPROPRIATE, TO ALL ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE WHO APPLY FOR SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(5) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above No

D. DETERMINE WHETHER COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE INDIVIDUAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

E. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

F. COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE PROVISIONS OF INFORMED CHOICE FOR ALL APPLICANTS AND ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

G. PROVIDE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES TO AMERICAN INDIANS WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING IN THE STATE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(13) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

H. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONDUCT OF SEMIANNUAL OR ANNUAL REVIEWS, AS APPROPRIATE, FOR INDIVIDUALS EMPLOYED EITHER IN AN EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT SETTING IN A COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM OR ANY OTHER EMPLOYMENT UNDER SECTION 14(C) OF THE FAIR
LABOR STANDARDS ACT OF 1938, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(14) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. MEET THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTIONS 101(A)(17) AND 103(B)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT IF THE STATE ELECTS TO CONSTRUCT, UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, FACILITIES FOR COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS.

J. WITH RESPECT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THE STATE,

I. HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT,
   A. STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ASSESSMENTS; AND
   B. STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE, TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ON A STATEWIDE BASIS; AND

II. HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO PROVIDE PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (SECTIONS 101(A)(15) AND 101(A)(25)).

5. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION FOR THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT TITLE VI SUPPLEMENT:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT ASSURES THAT IT WILL INCLUDE IN THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN ALL INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 606 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL SUBMIT REPORTS IN SUCH FORM AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUCH PROCEDURES AS THE COMMISSIONER MAY REQUIRE AND COLLECTS THE INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT SEPARATELY FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE I AND INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

C. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL COORDINATE ACTIVITIES WITH ANY OTHER STATE AGENCY THAT IS FUNCTIONING AS AN EMPLOYMENT NETWORK UNDER THE TICKET TO WORK AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM UNDER SECTION 1148 OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.

6. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL EXPEND NO MORE THAN 2.5 PERCENT OF THE STATE’S ALLOTMENT UNDER TITLE VI FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF CARRYING OUT THIS PROGRAM; AND, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR AGENCIES WILL PROVIDE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY THROUGH PUBLIC OR PRIVATE ENTITIES, NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN AN AMOUNT THAT IS NOT LESS THAN 10 PERCENT OF THE
COSTS OF CARRYING OUT SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDED TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES WITH THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR SUCH PURPOSE UNDER SECTION 603(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(G) AND (H) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL USE FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ONLY TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING EXTENDED SERVICES TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SUCH SERVICES; AND, THAT SUCH FUNDS ARE USED ONLY TO SUPPLEMENT AND NOT SUPPLANT THE FUNDS PROVIDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, WHEN PROVIDING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES SPECIFIED IN THE INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(A) AND (D), OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

7. PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AS DEFINED IN SECTION 7(39) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT:

I. THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 102(B)(1) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AND FUNDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT INCLUDES CONSIDERATION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AS AN APPROPRIATE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 606(B)(7)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT

II. AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT THAT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, WHICH IS DEVELOPED AND UPDATED WITH TITLE I FUNDS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 102(B)(3)(F) AND 606(B)(6)(C) AND (E) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE ASSURANCES FROM THE STATE
States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program—and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” in Sections II and III of that document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program (available on www.regulations.gov for public comment). The requirements that a State must address for any of the partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan are provided in this separate supplemental document. The Departments are not seeking comments on these program-specific requirements, which exist under separate OMB control numbers and do not represent requirements under WIOA. For further details on this overall collection, access the Federal eRulemaking Portal at http://www.regulations.gov by selecting Docket ID number ETA-2015-0006.

* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.
Include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability indicators based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA.

Instructions: Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each State submitting a Unified or Combined Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The State is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education on state adjusted levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.
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<th>Program</th>
<th>PY 2016 Proposed/Expected Level</th>
<th>PY 2016 Negotiated/Adjusted Level</th>
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User remarks on Table 1
### TABLE 2. EMPLOYMENT (FOURTH QUARTER AFTER EXIT)

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User remarks on Table 2
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User remarks on Table 6
### TABLE 7. COMBINED FEDERAL PARTNER MEASURES

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User remarks on Table 7
APPENDIX 2. OTHER STATE ATTACHMENTS (OPTIONAL)

The State of Illinois has presented a comprehensive Unified State Plan, which provides responses to all of the required elements. All core and required partners worked collaboratively to create an integrated plan that models WIOA and demonstrates alignment to benefit all Illinoisans. The portal version of the plan represents Illinois meeting its submission requirements. However, the authors of the plan believe the plan is most effective when viewed in its entirety. For a complete reading of the plan, including all charts, tables, graphics, and attachments, visit https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/DownloadPrint/ILLINOIS%20UNIFIED%20STATE%20PLAN_FINAL.pdf.