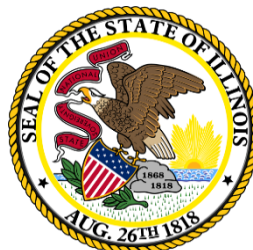


Illinois
Workforce
Innovation
Board

2020 – 2022 IWIB Strategic Plan

September 2020



Welcome Letter

2020 – 2022 Illinois Strategic Plan

As the Leadership Committee of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), we are pleased to present you with the 2020 – 2022 IWIB Strategic Plan. Since 2003, Illinois has been moving toward the alignment of workforce, education, and economic development.

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Illinois is using the unprecedented challenges and subsequent opportunities presented through COVID-19 to expand the alignment among the systems, leading to innovative work-based learning opportunities for both businesses and job seekers. COVID-19 is impacting how business operates, and new jobs will be created as part of the response. Our state is strong, and we will use these challenges as opportunities to create a foundation of preparedness to address future challenges to our workforce system. We recognize the demand will be greatly increased in response to COVID-19, and the system is addressing and responding to the needs of Illinoisans. We are discussing infrastructure updates that will assist the state in supporting the impacts of this pandemic and embracing the lessons learned to enhance and update our technology infrastructure.

It is important that we help employers survive by developing outreach that will help them come back successfully. IWIB should reach out to business and other entities (such as community providers and smaller partners that support and assist our work) in need with our advice, assistance, and expertise. IWIB is considering co-hosting webinars with chambers of commerce and other business associations to help business understand how the employment landscape is changing and what the state looks like from an employer's perspective. These webinars (presented in the summer and fall) would be sector-specific and share the expertise of the board's business voices in a panel format.

Over the past few years, the IWIB embraced its expanded role and responsibilities through WIOA to develop a plan that moves both state and local boards to a place of strategic leadership and sets the direction for the Unified Plan over the next four years. Given this ambitious agenda, continued partnering for success, transparency, and accountability must persist.

These partnerships will serve as the backbone to improve our system and customer service. The IWIB Strategic Plan is also focused on achieving increasingly better outcomes for our business and individual customers. Achieving the objectives detailed in this plan will require an unprecedented level of commitment from both the IWIB leadership and members, as well as Local Workforce Innovation Boards and our partner agencies. As a result, together:

- We as leaders of the workforce system must lead by example.
- We must be risk takers.

- We must foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.
- We must expect the same of staff in the Illinois workforce development system.

We encourage our local boards and chief elected officials to incorporate the principles found within this plan in their discussions around regional and local planning. It is acknowledged that you have the pulse of your communities and can best make decisions relative to the needs of your businesses and job seekers. Creative solutions are essential to the success of our plan and to realize the vision we all have for our Illinois businesses, citizens, and communities. The common goal of all the partners is quality employment and strengthening the talent development supply chain. Keeping this common goal and our customers at the forefront of our efforts will assist in achieving our vision.

We appreciate the great work you do on behalf of our business and individual customers and look forward to continuous improvement and great results throughout the implementation of this plan.

Sincerely,

Illinois Workforce Innovation Board 2020 – 2022 Strategic Plan

The Governor-appointed Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB), mandated by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), includes leaders from business, industry, state agencies, education, labor, and community-based organizations with the goal of evaluating and meeting the workforce needs of Illinois' employers and workers. WIOA requires that state workforce boards take a leadership role in guiding the workforce system through policies, strategies, and performance that address the needs of businesses, consumers, employees, community members, and partners. These boards have the responsibility of overseeing the development, implementation, and modification of the Unified State Plan, convening all relevant programs, required partners and stakeholders, and providing oversight and strategic leadership for the state workforce development system.

Furthermore, boards are to act as conveners of the system bringing together employers and community partners at the state, regional, and local levels to promote economic growth through these partnerships and ensure alignment between education and workforce services. Active participation of all board members and close collaboration with partners, including public and private organizations, is vital to this success. In Illinois, this active participation occurs through a committee and task force structure, in which IWIB representatives from private/public partner programs implement policy recommendations to strengthen Illinois' workforce system.

A formal Vision and Mission for the IWIB, along with the priority areas, served as the framework for the board to make strategic decisions to lead the workforce system. As a starting point, the IWIB identified five priority areas that focus on integrated and equitable service delivery design, business engagement through sector strategy framework, career pathway development, and metrics for measuring success.

VISION

Illinois will strive to be a national workforce development leader by creating a cohesive, business-led system that equally supports job seekers and businesses through regional economic prosperity and global markets.

MISSION

“The Illinois workforce system's purpose is to integrate education, workforce, and economic development resources and services that support economic growth and job creation for individuals, businesses, and communities in the State.”

PRIORITY AREAS

1. Integrate service delivery, improving access and opportunity for all populations.
2. Promote business demand-driven orientation through a sector strategy framework, grounded in strong partnerships within business and among business at all levels of the system.
3. Grow career pathways to enhance opportunities for Illinoisans to stimulate the economy.
4. Monitor, track, and assess clear metrics for progress and success to inform continuous improvement and innovation efforts.
5. Ensure accountability as a board and as system partners for outcomes and transparency through marketing and outreach to the system.

IWIB GOALS

Equitable access is a fundamental principle within WIOA, the Illinois WIOA Unified Plan, as well as a high priority of the Governor. The work of the IWIB is to establish goals to improve inequities for the populations we serve, create accessible career pathways for all customers that address barriers to employment, and enhance equality among partners.

Business Engagement:

The IWIB will engage the business community through sector strategies and career pathways that strengthen and expand the building and sustainability of business-led partnerships. Engagement will be targeted through industry sectors and emerging pathways by promoting work-based learning, seeking out minority owned businesses, and developing innovative approaches to improve competitiveness and equity among partners.

Customer-Centered Design:

Executing a customer-centered service delivery model has the intended outcome of utilizing approaches that produce equitable outcomes and result in higher customer satisfaction for both businesses and jobseekers. This will be accomplished by addressing challenges to employment and creating career pathway approaches for all clients that lead to industry-recognized credentials and ultimately sustainable employment.

Technology:

Deploying user-friendly accessible technology to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the system provides for coordinated service delivery which is a foundational approach under WIOA.

Workforce Board Impact:

Strengthening state and local workforce board effectiveness moves these boards into a strategic position to set priorities and garner a better understanding of roles and responsibilities.

IWIB Composition and Coordination

The Governor-appointed Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) includes leaders from state, business, industry, labor, education, and community-based organizations with the goal of evaluating and meeting the workforce needs of Illinois' employers and workers. The Illinois membership represents four key areas – Business and Industry, Education and Training, Government and Public Administration, and Business Management Administration.

Through a committee and task force structure, IWIB representatives from private/public partner programs offer policy recommendations to strengthen Illinois' workforce system. Illinois strives to 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.

The IWIB supports the key elements outlined in the State Unified Plan by creating an environment favorable to the formation of employer-led sector partnerships and the improvement of communications between business, economic development, workforce development, and education through the work of the IWIB Business Engagement Committee. The IWIB works to increase the number of meaningful, public-private relationships and improve the quality of the new and existing public-private partnerships within the work of the Apprenticeship Committee. Moreover, through the Continuous Improvement Committee, the IWIB promotes data and demand-driven workforce and education initiatives. The IWIB supports utilizing the WIOA system infrastructure to support the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development, and education initiatives to develop sector partnerships and career pathways through the Career Pathway Targeted Populations Committee. Each of the committees have their individual charges and priorities that are outlined in the IWIB Strategic Plan and are coordinated through the Executive Committee and the IWIB Leadership Committee.

The IWIB Leadership Committee was established as a networking vehicle and serves as a place for dialogue between committee chairs, the executive committee, and lead committee staff to coordinate work and remedy duplication between committees. In addition, the IWIB committee staff meet monthly to create space for informal conversation and opportunities for collaboration.

Furthermore, the IWIB strategies and activities discussed within this plan align with those found in the Illinois Unified State Plan, the EO3, and the Perkins V state plan.

WIOA UNIFIED STATE PLAN PRINCIPLES

The principles outlined in the WIOA Unified State Plan define the founding principles for the state. It is evident that the work of the IWIB aligns with the principles through the work of the IWIB standing committees and taskforce.

Demand-Driven Orientation:

Through a sector strategy framework, the state will **support the system assessment of business needs for talent across local, regional, and state levels.**

[Business Engagement Committee / Career Pathways Targeted Populations Committee](#)

Strong Partnerships with Business at All Levels:

Strong partnerships with business will assist employers to define in-demand skills and articulate those needs to education and training providers.

[Business Engagement Committee / Apprenticeship Committee](#)

Pathways to Careers of Today and Tomorrow:

The development of **career pathways that meet employers' skill needs today, while offering individuals clear opportunities to build and upgrade their skills**, earn industry-recognized credentials, and advance their career over time.

[Career Pathways Targeted Populations Committee / Service Integration Workgroup](#)

Cross-agency Collaboration and Connections:

There will be a focus on improving **strategic connections across all components** and levels of the education and workforce systems.

[Executive Committee / Service Integration Workgroup / Interagency Policy Workgroup](#)

Integrated Service Delivery:

Illinois will more effectively serve business and individual customers by **implementing service integration strategies.**

[Service Integration Workgroup / Career Pathways Targeted Populations Committee / Apprenticeship Committee](#)

Equitable Access and Opportunity for All Populations:

Connecting individuals with relevant supports such as transportation, childcare, and transition services will help targeted populations prepare for and advance along a career pathway.

[Equity Taskforce / Career Pathways Targeted Populations Committee](#)

Clear Metrics for Progress and Success:

Illinois will develop or **adopt metrics that monitor progress and success, informing continuous improvement and innovation efforts.**

[Continuous Improvement Committee](#)

Focus on Continuous Improvement and Innovation:
Illinois will **advance systemic and sustainable change that drives us to be prompt, agile, and responsive to changing economic conditions.**
Continuous Improvement Committee

The Unified Plan outlines the goals for achieving the states strategic vision.

1. Unite workforce development partners around regional cluster strategies:
Regional cluster strategies will focus resources on the industries with the highest potential to add jobs and increase prosperity in regions across Illinois. These strategies bring together the public and private sectors in each region to build on their unique strengths.
2. Prepare Illinois workers for a career, not just their next job: Regardless of background, life circumstances, or education level, Illinois workers can be prepared for high-demand careers by developing core academic, technical, and essential employability skills throughout their lifetimes.
3. Connect job seekers with employers: Assist Illinois businesses to find the productive workers they need, through more efficient training and better services for job seekers and employers.

State Strategies to Achieve these Goals: Six essential state strategies underpin Illinois' commitment to engage and support all parts of our education, workforce, and economic development systems.

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

The IWIB has a demand-driven strategic planning process grounded in strong partnerships across education (secondary and postsecondary), workforce, and economic development at the State, regional, and local levels.

Strategy 2: Support Employer-Driven Regional Sector Initiatives

The IWIB continues to guide this important work to ensure investment in resources and promotion of skills and careers in targeted industry and high demand occupations.

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

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: Expand Service Integration

Defined as "a combination of strategies to align and simplify access to one-stop center services and supports for employers, job seekers, and workforce professionals within the

system," the goal of service integration in Illinois is to provide the best experience possible for all WIOA customers.

Strategy 5: Promote Improved Data-Driven Decision Making

Partner agencies will design, develop, and use the statewide public-private data infrastructure (see Strategy 6, below) to provide both employers and job seekers with information and tools to promote and access job openings, review changing labor market trends and opportunities, identify funding opportunities, and fund education, training, and support services.

Strategy 6: Advance Public-Private Data Infrastructure Focusing on the IWIB Vision

The board will ensure measures are implemented that will guide Illinois through sustainable, systemic change. It 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. To assure that the IWIB can lead the efforts of Illinois in these six strategic areas, the board has identified a need to strengthen the effectiveness and impact of its members and the membership of local workforce boards. Strategies will be developed to identify appropriate methods of outreach between the IWIB and local boards, as well as the technical assistance and resource needs that will allow board members to better understand their functions and responsibilities and ensure accountability in effectively conducting their business.

The IWIB utilized the standing committees, workgroups, and task forces to develop this updated strategic plan.

IWIB committees include in alphabetical order:

1. Apprenticeship Committee
2. Business Engagement Committee
3. Career Pathways Targeted Populations Committee
4. Continuous Improvement Committee
5. Executive Committee

The work of the committees demonstrates the work of the IWIB. Each committee's work grows out of the priorities of the IWIB and is explained in the committees charge and priority areas.

Apprenticeship Committee

Charge:

- Fully integrate apprenticeship into state workforce development, education, and economic development strategies and programs.

- Support the rapid development of new apprenticeship programs and/or the significant expansion of existing programs.
- Support the development and recruitment of a diverse pipeline of apprentices.
- Build state capacity to make it easier for businesses to start apprenticeship programs and for apprentices to access opportunities.

Committee Priorities:

1. Promote the value of resources available for job seekers and employers, raising awareness of the benefits of apprenticeship
 - Embed the Navigator-Intermediary Framework into LWAs or EDRs.
 - Develop a peer-to-peer network to promote apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities

2. Create and promote various points of entry into apprenticeship to support underrepresented populations.
 - Develop the Youth and Pre-Apprenticeship Work Group to reach people earlier and provide support to those (no matter their age) who may face barriers in entering an apprenticeship program.
 - Determine equity targets for marginalized populations, with the goal of providing more apprenticeship opportunities or other openings/WIOA programs as an entry point for those marginalized populations.

3. System Building
 - Formalize the Apprenticeship Illinois system, including a centralized lead to guide the work of Navigators and Intermediaries.
 - Coordinate apprenticeship with educational, workforce, and economic development initiatives.
 - Coordinate or develop a clearinghouse for information related to apprenticeship bills that are being promoted, and other government and non-governmental agencies that are promoting apprenticeship outside of our line of sight.

Business Engagement Committee (BEC)

Charge:

- Provide guidance and direction to help bridge the gap between Illinois' important business sectors and employers, and the Illinois workforce development system.

Committee Priorities:

1. Engage Illinois' business community in the development and direction of regional industry-led sector partnerships that will convene employers, workforce development professionals, and other regional institutions and partners. These partnerships will seek to coordinate investments, align workforce and education systems, and promote economic growth across the state.
2. Develop and improve communication mechanisms between employers and the workforce development system in order to increase employers' awareness of the services available to them that are designed to provide them with the skilled workforce they require.
3. Assist the IWIB with outreach and recruitment of business representatives from across the state to the board, and to assist Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIBs) with outreach and recruitment to those boards, as well.

Career Pathways Targeted Populations Committee (CPTP)

Charges:

- Create opportunities for learners of all ages and ability with a focus on those individuals defined as targeted populations to enhance their career awareness, career skills, and life skills through experiences with the education and training, work-based learning and essential skills as enhanced by the Illinois Essential Employability Skills approach.
- Serves as the intersection between job seekers, businesses, the education system, local workforce agencies, and other interested stakeholders.

Committee Priorities: Integrate and Involve

1. Being a link between the IWIB and the Local Workforce system to impact and improve the lives of Illinois citizens particularly those that are identified as WIOA targeted populations.
2. Integration and comprehensive involvement of all partners, including the four core partners, business sector, secondary and postsecondary education, workforce labor, legislative, and local implementation partners.
3. Work with the Business Engagement Committee to provide business and industry an awareness of the Illinois career pathway efforts to provide sustainable business-driven talent solutions for small and historically underrepresented owned business.
4. Work with the Apprenticeship Committee to provide work-based experiences for targeted populations.

Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC)

Charge:

- Review evaluation elements of policies, programs, and processes created or overseen by the IWIB to determine the appropriateness of their relationship to their expected outcomes. Provide feedback and recommendations.
- Review outcomes of evaluation to determine if results conform to intended outcome. Provide feedback and recommendations.
- Review local performance related to the six federal performance measures for the WIOA core partners and make recommendations about strategies for continuous improvement at local levels.
- Examine and evaluate workforce quality and earning benchmarks and recommend changes.
- Provide recommendations for readily accessible data and technical assistance for an intended audience.
- Manage priority activities as assigned by the IWIB Strategic Plan.

Committee Priorities:

1. Conduct evaluations of policies.
2. Develop an understanding of how WIOA programs (under Title One, Two, Three, and Four) are evaluated, what continuous improvement processes are in place and included, and what lead agency technical assistance is involved.
3. Provide the IWIB committees with a clear understanding of how outcomes are evaluated and define the process for upcoming policy.

Executive Committee

Charges

- Develop policies to strengthen communication between partners and support engagement between employers and the workforce/economic development system.
- Develop policies and initiatives to improve coordination, communication, and relationships across business service teams to build relationships.
- Support a system change from a social services-driven approach to a business-driven one.
- Recommend state policy and/or guidelines to encourage the adoption of effective local business coordination practices.

IWIB Professional Development

Professional development for the IWIB is essential to ensure members are engaged with the system, aware of the program, and able to make an impact on the state. Over the past two years the IWIB has worked to develop an on-boarding process for IWIB members to introduce and reinforce their understanding of their roles and responsibilities, local workforce initiatives and strategies, and relevant workforce data and trends.

During this strategic plan period, the IWIB will roll out orientation for IWIB members and implement online training focused on programs over which the board has authority. Online module topics include board effectiveness, partners and partnership, board policy development and oversight, and roles and responsibilities of represented sectors.

Action Items that the IWIB will maintain and update

- a. Maintain the implementation plan, including timelines and delivery strategies,
- b. Utilize the annual IWIB retreat or time prior to regular quarterly meetings to inform members of the WIOA system climate.
- c. Update the comprehensive, online IWIB Member Manual and maintain virtual libraries on workNet (including webinars, videos, and podcasts) for new IWIB and LWIB members. Topics should include their role, responsibilities, the overall purpose of the board, relevant legislation, an overview of WIOA programs and policies, core and required agency partners, and other providers of WIOA services.
- d. Create a mentoring program to connect new members with long-term members.
- e. Seek assistance from the National Association of Workforce Boards in building these libraries; adopt or adapt materials they might have already developed.

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) stressed the need for the provision of professional development in the original 2018-2020 Strategic Plan, which was reinforced in multiple areas of Illinois' Unified State Plan and 2020 updates and modifications to the strategic plan. Illinois' response is the development of a comprehensive Illinois Workforce Academy (IWA). The purpose of the IWA is to support the WIOA system in a pursuit for continuous improvement through education. The Academy will provide professional development that develops foundational knowledge for all partners to help WIOA personnel have the knowledge, skills and capacity to better serve our customers effectively.

Professional development opportunities are coordinated by the WIOA Professional Development Committee, comprised of representative from the WIOA partners and business. The WIOA Professional Development Committee is charged with coordinating regional and statewide professional development for the WIOA system

as it relates to WIOA implementation, service integration, and policy. As the committee works to develop to the IWA they implemented a three-pronged approach to professional development to ensure all levels of the system were supported. WIOA Wednesday weekly webinars, regional fall workshops and the spring WIOA Summit provide year-round support for the WIOA system.