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**Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP)**

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 (United States Census). Employment Security’s EI&A Division is unique in the nation in having established enhanced measures of workforce outcomes that utilize 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 the specific benefits of job training programs.

In 2017, the Illinois Task Force on Employment and Economic Opportunity for Persons with Disabilities (EEOPD) submitted a plan to Governor Rauner and the State Legislature that recommended actionable steps to address barriers to competitive employment and economic opportunity for persons with disabilities. The EEOPD was the result of Illinois becoming an “Employment First” state with the objective of ensuring that people with disabilities are given the option to engage in integrated, competitive employment at or above minimum wage. No disability specific information found regarding this element. (Page 114) Title II

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. (Page 165) Title II

Illinois is a designated “Employment First” state, demonstrating its commitment to ensuring employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred option for people with disabilities. Physical and Programmatic accessibility in the one-stop delivery system is essential to achieving this vision. To that end, Illinois places a high priority on creating strategies that provide seamless access to employment and training services within a universal environment.
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In 2017 the Illinois Task Force on Employment and Economic Opportunity for Persons with Disabilities (EEOPD) completed its final recommendations in the areas of workforce development, employment, transition services to youth and provider transformation. In February 2018 the task force co-chairs provided testimony to a joint House-Senate committee charged with reviewing the recommendations in consideration of possible future legislation. Additional meetings with elected officials have been scheduled to further explore the recommendations.

Illinois has also developed an Employment First Interagency Council coordinated by the Department of Human Services and which includes representatives of state agencies serving people with disabilities. A key focus is coordinating joint efforts and promoting training and development for staff of state agencies as well as community providers. (Page 198) Title II

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. (Page 305) Title IV

State Agency for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) DRS and DDD participate on the State’s Employment First Task Force, as well as the DHS employment first team. An initial phase of coordinated activities focused on the Balancing Incentive Program (BIP), which provided one—time funds to Illinois to promote innovative services that will benefit individuals with disabilities, including organizational transformation efforts for community agencies not traditionally offering employment services. At the end of BIP funding both divisions worked with national subject matter experts from Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy to continue organizational transformation efforts and promote competitive integrated employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. (Pages 305-306) Title IV

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. DRS hopes to be able to
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build on experience from recent pilot projects for customized employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Ongoing discussions with the state developmental disabilities agency on include exploring options for customized employment projects. (Page 328) Title IV

Customized Employment

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. This goal has been extended for the next two program years, with 50 new business engagements and 100 employment outcomes anticipated in PY2018 and 65 new business engagements and 125 employment outcomes in PY2019. Goal 9: Continue Expansion of Innovative Program Options In PY2018 and PY2019 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. (Page 322) Title IV

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. (Page 328-329) Title IV

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 targeted in this approach will be those identified through the sector analysis conducted as part of the State’s WIOA regional planning process. This will be coordinated with other workforce partner agencies through the integrated business services model adopted in Illinois. Finally DRS will increase employer engagements through establishment of a workforce unit staffed by a team of business service consultants to be hired in PY2018. 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
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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. (Page 329-330) Title IV

Data is not yet available on measurable skill gains for postsecondary training. DRS exceeded its goal regarding establishment of a business engagement team. DRS provided training to approximately 50 field staff in PY2016 and established relationships with over 75 businesses. DRS will continue expansion of engagement efforts in the coming program years. DRS was able to expand individual placement and support (IPS) services for diverse populations in PY2016 and PY2017. However, the number of Project Search sites remained the same with five provider agencies under contract in PY2017. DRS continues efforts to identify provider agencies interested in provision of customized employment but there are no agencies under contract to date specifically for this service. Some agencies with supported employment contracts report providing some version of customized employment but it is uncertain whether the service model being utilized is consistent with the definition of customized employment. DRS has continued to expand performance based funding with implementation of a new model for supported employment in PY2017. There are 54 providers with performance-based supported employment contracts currently in place. (Page 336) Title IV

Braiding/Blending Resources

Developing joint projects between adult education programs, local workforce boards and others in areas 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 for foster youth, including youth who are aging out of the foster care system. The Departments of Commerce and 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. (Page 108) Title I

DEI/Disability Resource Coordinators

The Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services has worked effectively with Commerce around its Disability Employment Initiative 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. In 2017 Commerce and DRS developed a series of online video presentations providing information on state disability programs and workforce services for people with disabilities. This includes a set of videos in American Sign Language for the benefit of deaf individuals. DRS will
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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. (Page 59) Title I

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 enrolling concurrently in a Career Technical Education program. Individuals enrolled in an IET program will receive instruction that is contextualized to a specific sector and includes employability/workforce preparation skills and 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. Under this model, individuals can earn credentials within a year, 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 awareness of best and promising practices for local staff and will provide technical assistance to foster their integration into the regular WIOA local workflow. (Page 106) Title I

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 aligns 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. (Page 116) Title I

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. (Page 120) Title I

Financial Literacy/Economic Advancement

○ 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
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carried out by Statewide Independent Living Councils established under section 705 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 796d), programs funded under Part B of Chapter 1 of Title VII of such Act (29 USC 796e et seq.), and activities carried out by centers for independent living, as defined in section 702 of such Act (29 USC796a);

- Adult education and literacy activities, including those provided by public libraries;
- Activities in the corrections system that assist returning citizens as they reenter the workforce; and
- Financial literacy activities.

- Support 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. (Page 91) Title I

School to Work Transition

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
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. (Page 164) Title II

While recognizing the global understanding of registered apprenticeships, the Apprenticeship Plus model expands this very successful model to address the youth population through Youth Apprenticeships, prepares all populations through Pre-Apprenticeships, and widens the scope to consider all work-based learning models as a means to prepare individuals with the new skills they need to succeed in the workforce through a career and not just a job. These “learn and earn” models are widely accepted by businesses as efficient and effective means to meet their talent needs. Working closely with The Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth, this committee assists in development of best practice models in registered apprenticeships, youth apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeships and work-based learning models of providing training and education across the state. (Page 172) Title II

In addition to the role of the EOMC, the state has participated in or funded initiatives through the one-stop system that expand access to services for individuals with disabilities and that focus on developing relationships by leveraging resources and enhancing employment opportunities for people with disabilities. One example is our Disability Employment Initiative Round V grant that focuses on career pathways for youth. Opportunity Youth are participating in sector-based training such as Information Technology through a connection between the school district and the one-stop system to make their existing “career pathways” systems fully inclusive of and accessible to individuals with disabilities. A significant improvement in this pilot is the development of an Individualized Career Development Plan (ICDP). The ICDP provides an overview of planned experiences for students participating in secondary school beginning at age 14½, or upon entry to high school. It also aligns with the Illinois Individualized Education Program (IEP) Transition Plan and Summary of Performance components to alleviate duplication of document development for students with disabilities and to provide comprehensive information about goals and avenues for meeting post-high school goals. It is important to note that the ICDP is a result of discussions between the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and DCEO. Furthermore, ISBE adopted the ICDP for use by special education programs. (Page 199) Title II

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 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.
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 pre-employment transition services and individualized transition services facilitating 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. (Page 301) Title IV

DRS also worked with other WIOA partner agencies to develop a state integrated business services framework. The framework is designed to ensure that all businesses have a means of contacting a workforce business services representative, and that business services at the local and regional level are coordinated with each other and not duplicative. DRS acts as the consultant to local business teams on all disability-related matters. 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. (Page 304) Title IV

In the current program year DRS has developed pre-employment transition services through contracts with community rehabilitation programs in order to provide work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities. These contracts are limited in scope but to the extent
they are successful DRS will consider expanding them to other geographic areas of the state. 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. This activity will be accomplished in conjunction with the integrated business services effort developed by core workforce partners in Illinois. (Page 305) Title IV

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 IDEA: 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. (Page 314) Title IV

The FAC serves as a primary source of information on the need for supported employment services for individuals with most significant disabilities. The STEP committee has served as an important source of input on the need for expansion of pre-employment transition services in various areas of the state. In the last two years several new STEP contracts have been developed with local school districts through input provided through this mechanism. The STEP group reports regularly on issues and concerns relating to working with employers to establish work-based learning experiences for students. Statistical Analysis The most fundamental statistic relating to service needs is the lack of population growth in Illinois. The population has dropped by 80,415 or 0.62 percent from 2014 to 2017, ranking third lowest in the nation during that time period. To some extent Illinois is experiencing population change similar to other states in that
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the number of residents in rural areas is declining while the population of older residents is growing. Population change varies greatly by race and ethnicity. The white, non-Hispanic population dropped by 3.4 percent between 2010 and 2016, a reduction of nearly 270,000 people. The African American population was generally unchanged in that time period, increasing by less than one percent. The Latino population increased by 7.3 percent in that time period, roughly by 150,000 people. The largest increase was for the Asian population, which grew by 20 percent or about 117,000 people. (Pages 315-316) Title IV

While additional needs assessment data have yet to be analyzed, DRS believes it has an accurate picture of transition and pre-employment transition needs for students with disabilities. This is based on prior needs assessment surveys and data gathered from transition age students in the 2017 VR customer satisfaction survey. As noted above, DRS relies on ongoing relationships with STEP schools as an information source, expanding services when additional needs are identified. DRS also worked with the Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living to respond to needs identified by their member agencies. In the current program year DRS has contracted with eight CILs to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities, focusing on self-advocacy training as well as job readiness training, particularly in the area of independent living skills training. DRS also developed contracts with community rehabilitation programs to provide work-based learning experiences to students with disabilities in the Chicago area. These projects are being evaluated to determine whether additional projects should be established elsewhere in the state. (Page 318) Title IV

Data from the 2017 survey for transition age students indicate a need for a variety of work-based learning experiences during the high school years, as well as improved coordination of services around the time an individual leaves high school. Many respondents had positive comments about the pre-employment transition services they received while in high school, as well as individualized transition services during and after high school. However a common theme was the need for better communication about services available after high school and how those can lead to successful employment. Comments reflected less of a concern about a lack of services so much as concerns about making the various services work more effectively together. (Page 319) Title IV

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, with 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 pursue opportunities to work 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 three approaches to expanding the number of business partnerships. The first is continuation of participation in the National
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Employment Team (the NET), an effort coordinated by the national CSAVR team. (Page 329)

**Title IV**

**Career Pathways**

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

**Apprenticeship**

Apprenticeship Committee: The IWIB has identified the design of a comprehensive system of apprenticeships (traditional and non-traditional) as 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 has created a plan for the IWIB that establishes a comprehensive and integrated apprenticeship system in Illinois, oversees its implementation and performance and recommends improvements. Initial strategies developed by the Apprenticeship Committee include:

- 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. (Page 171)

**Title II**

- 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: • Adult education as defined above. (Page 277)

**Work Incentives and Benefits**

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. (Page 120) Title I

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) musculo—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 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.
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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. (Page 324-325) Title IV

Employer/Business

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 146 school districts, of which 130 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. (Page 300) Title IV

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, which include hours worked and earnings, if any. In the current program year DRS has developed pre—employment transition services through contracts with community rehabilitation programs in order to provide work—based learning.
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Experiences for students with disabilities. These contracts are limited in scope but to the extent they are successful DRS will consider expanding them to other geographic areas of the state. 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. This activity will be accomplished in conjunction with the integrated business services effort developed by core workforce partners in Illinois. (Page 304-305) Title IV

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, with 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 pursue opportunities to work 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 three 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 targeted in this approach will be those identified through the sector analysis conducted as part of the State’s WIOA regional planning process. This will be coordinated with other workforce partner agencies through the integrated business services model adopted in Illinois. (Page 329) Title IV
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### Data Collection

**DRS Response:** DRS is committed to the ongoing development and implementation of the Quick Reference Guide. The staff development unit will work with the SRC to ensure that VR counselors receive training in the use of the Guide. Also, revisions will be made to the online casework procedure manual to ensure consistency with language in the Guide. DRS will work with the SRC to develop a quarterly report to the specifications described above. DRS will also work with the SRC and with the CAP administrator to improve awareness of CAP information by VR customers.

**SRC Comment:** The SRC recommends regular statewide needs assessment and satisfaction surveys to DRS customers, transition students, provider agencies and employees be completed once every two years to determine areas for service improvement. Customer and transition student surveys should seek to determine customer satisfaction, quality of services, customer treatment and service accessibility. Provider surveys should seek to determine areas needing improvement such as partnering, agency interactions, and communication. Staff surveys should seek to determine level of satisfaction with their job and help to determine areas of improvement. The SRC suggests that to ensure accessibility, the availability of multiple survey completion options are necessary, and recommends supplementing online survey administration with information gathering techniques, such as in-person focus groups or telephone interviews. DRS Response: DRS agrees that a system of regular survey data collection is desirable for planning and needs assessment purposes. The surveys conducted through the SRC in the last year have provided a valuable baseline for studying trends going forward. DRS is committed to working with the SRC to develop a schedule of surveys and other information collection efforts to create an improved understanding of the environment facing people with disabilities in Illinois. (Page 293) **Title IV**

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. (Page 301) **Title IV**

### 511

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

## Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination: Section 188

The Department has oversight of the Equal Opportunity (EO) provisions of Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act for Title I programs administered throughout Illinois’ twenty-two local workforce innovation areas. In 2017, the Deputy Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity began working closely with the EO offices from the other core partner programs to ensure coordinated efforts among all EO Officers. This is an effort to minimize the potential for duplicative services at the regional and local level, while maximizing the expertise.
The certification process ensures that local workforce innovation boards (LWIBs) oversee the delivery of employment and training programs in their communities and support high levels of effectiveness and sustainability. This process also requires assurance that implementation of the non-discrimination and Equal Opportunity provisions of WIOA Section 188 has been met through compliance with the Methods of Administration (MoA) and completion of an Accessibility Report at least once every three years. In early 2018, the policy work group will convene again to review the past certification process and identify best practices that local boards utilized, as well as expand the policy to require that all affiliate and specialized centers be certified.

As discussed within the policy section, the IWIB, in cooperation with the Interagency Work Group, established 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 establishing standards and assessing 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 the efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce development system. Outcomes from assessments of core program partners and other required partners will be reported annually and made public.

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. These services must be provided “on-demand” and in “near real time” in the physical Comprehensive one-stop center location or via technology consistent with the “direct linkage” requirement defined in WIOA.

Another significant role in ensuring the physical and programmatic accessibility is the IWIB’s One-Stop Center Certification policy discussed in the State Operating Systems and Policies portion of the Unified Plan. The certification criteria specified by the IWIB to evaluate the Comprehensive One-Stop Center’s programmatic accessibility ensures equal access to all required programs, services, and activities to eligible participants and employers regardless of their range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, intelligence or education level. 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”
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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 (Page 199) Title II

Finally, staff training is integral to making sure all services are programmaticallly and physically accessible. The state has hosted a series of webinar events that include updated provisions on WIOA 188, technical assistance provided by Diversity Partners project on leveraging business relations to benefit job seekers with disabilities, and the requirements of Comprehensive One-Stop Center certification. Additionally, the state has and will continue to conduct summits that provide best practices for serving individuals with disabilities.

The Departments of Commerce and Employment Security developed an agreement to better align the ADA monitoring process of American Job Centers. This agreement will allow for better alignment of office inspection timing and for improved cross-agency communication regarding inspection findings. In facilities where both Title III and Title IB staff are located, DCEO will conduct the ADA inspections in order to avoid duplication of services and better align findings and related reports. DCEO will provide IDES with the ADA inspection report after the inspection has been completed. If IDES is the lease holder, IDES will then work with Central Management Services and/or the landlord to correct any findings. (Page 200) Title II

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. (Page 333-334) Title IV

Vets

The Unemployment Insurance program is designated to contribute to the state’s overall economic stability by partially protecting eligible workers against loss of income during periods of unemployment. Eligible workers who become unemployed and meet all requirements set forth in the UI Act may receive benefits for the maximum number of weeks payable under the law or
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The Job Counseling, Training, and Placement Services for Veterans program ensures priority of service to Veterans over all other job applicants, actively promotes and develops employment opportunities, and provides placement and vocational guidance services, specifically for those Veterans who have significant barriers to employment. Additional information regarding priority of service for Veterans may be found at http://www.dol.gov/VETS/E8-30166.pdf. (Page 49)

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, 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. (Page 81)

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. (Page 196)

In Illinois, Employment Security serves as the lead agency for veteran’s employment and employer services. The Illinois Department of Employment Security’s Job for Veterans State Grant Plan incorporates and aligns with the Illinois Unified State Plan. All veterans, regardless of their characterization of discharge, are provided employment services by Wagner-Peyser staff, using the Veterans triage process. All Veterans coming into the American Job Centers must receive an Initial Assessment from either an Employment Specialist or WIA staff. If during this Initial Assessment, a Veteran self-identifies as having a Significant Barrier to Employment, then they are referred to the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist for possible Intensive Services and Case Management. While in Case Management or as part of the Intensive Services process, a Veteran may continue to receive Basic Career Services from both the Employment Services Specialist and WIOA staff. Once the Veteran’s significant barriers to employment have been mitigated and they are job ready, the DVOP specialist will work in partnership with the Local Veterans Employment Representative to develop job opportunities with the Veterans’ chosen career field. As a member of the agency’s Business Services Team, the Local Veterans Employment Representative advocates for all Veterans with Businesses and Business Groups within the American Job Center’s operational area. The Local Veterans...
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Employment Representative can assist any American Job Center staff member working with a Veteran to develop job opportunities. (Page 197) Title II

Mental Health

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. TANF is a time-limited cash assistance program for families meeting eligibility rules. DHS operates Family Community Resource Centers (FCRC) statewide serving TANF customers on the pathway to self-sufficiency. TANF customers are evaluated and assessed for suitability for employment and training programs. TANF customers are also assessed to determine barriers and barrier reduction service needs. These issues may be related to substance abuse, mental health and domestic violence. The FCRC identifies the customer’s needs to create a Responsibility and Service Plan (RSP), which is a guide to services. The RSP contains employment and training needs, supportive service needs (e.g., transportation and uniforms) and child care. Most TANF customers are also eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and medical assistance. (Page 49) Title I

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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 PY2018 DRS expects to continue the following levels of funding for supported employment activities. While funding under Title VI-B is uncertain at this time, DRS anticipates providing supported employment services to approximately 125 individuals, with total funding of $0.95 million, utilizing 30 provider agencies.. Supported employment provided with Title I funds: approximately 1,450 individuals, total funding $4.2 million, approximately 55 provider agencies. Beginning in July 2017 DRS implemented a new performance-based 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. (Page 303) Title II

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. Research suggests that implementation of IPS principles in VR service provision can be of benefit to a wider range of individuals. DRS and DMH are working with consultants from the Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy to examine service relationships and coordinate funding to enable more individuals with mental illness to participate in vocational services. (Page 306) Title IV

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 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. DRS conducts periodic surveys of field office staff, including supervisors, counselors and case coordinators. Staff are 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. (Page 312) Title IV

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. DRS hopes to be able to build on experience from recent pilot projects for customized employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Ongoing discussions with the state developmental disabilities agency on
include exploring options for customized employment projects. (Page 328) Title IV

DRS also makes its services available to non-English speakers, either through employment of bilingual staff or through a translation service. In PY2017 DRS established new performance-based contracts with six community agencies across the state for outreach to minority communities. 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. In recent years DRS has worked closely with Helen Keller National Center, the primary resource in the US for deaf—blind services. This has included staff training and presentations as well as utilizing HKNC expertise in designing training environments for deaf-blind individuals served by DRS. DRS is currently working with HKNC to develop support services for deaf-blind individuals to increase their opportunities for sustaining competitive integrate employment. An assessment of staff training needs identified a strong need for training in the medical aspects of disability for VR counselors and supervisors. DRS has developed an arrangement with an external online training entity to provide training on medical aspects as well as other topics such as low-incidence disabilities of interest to rehabilitation counselors. DRS continues in its efforts to implement a system of individual placement and support services (IPS) programs, also 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. (Page 331) Title IV

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.

For youth with a most significant disability DRS utilizes available funds to provide extended services for a period of up to 48 months or until such time as the individual turns age 25 and no longer meets the definition of "youth with a disability". (Page 338) Title IV

RTW/SAW

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (Employment Security) continues to work to enhance the Labor Market Information (LMI) system to support the six WIOA strategies. Traditional LMI produced by Employment Security is readily available on the Employment
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The Security website, the Virtual Labor Market Information (VLMI) system (a Geographic Solutions web tool which houses the Workforce Information Database per the requirements of the Workforce Information Grant), and limited LMI through the IL Career Information System (wages and projections). 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. Also included are the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (labor force data) and Current Employment Statistics (local area jobs data by industry). Near 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. (Page 145) Title I

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—work services through the VR program. DRS has one community provider contract that focuses on return—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). Since 2016 the number of postsecondary students served by DRS has increased by 40 percent. 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. (Page 329) Title IV

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—work services through the VR program. DRS has one community provider contract that focuses on return—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. 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
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community college programs. As this effort continues we should observe increased performance on the training—related WIOA measures. To improve data quality, DRS has made 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. (Page 333) Title IV

*All enclosed information is cited directly from final state plan as of June 30, 2019

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https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/state-plans/index.html