



## Illinois (IL) WIOA Matrix

### Employment First State Leadership Mentor Program (EFSLMP)

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. (Page 168)

Coordination with the Employment and Economic Development for Persons with Disabilities Task Force created under Illinois' Employment First initiative will be an important resource for increasing competitive integrated employment for citizens with disabilities. (Page 207)

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. (Page 310)

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. (Page 337-338)

### Customized Employment

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. (Page 338)

DRS is pursuing several strategies to continually increase the number of employment outcomes, including: development of a business engagement strategy; establishment of stronger partnerships with local workforce boards; increasing business partnerships through the NET and other approaches; providing job placement training to all VR counselors; continuing an emphasis on establishing performance based contracts with community provider agencies; providing personal organization training to VR counselors; establishing outreach efforts to increase referrals to the VR program; and implementation of customized employment methodologies. DRS is following three main strategies to increase median earnings. The first is to increase the number of individuals enrolled in university and community college programs. (Page 339)

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The businesses target in this approach will be those identified through the sector analysis conducted as part of the State's WIOA regional planning process. DRS intends to continue development of innovative program options, including customized employment and individual placement and support (IPS) services. One strategy is continued involvement with national technical assistance resources, including subject matter experts made available through the DOL Vision Quest program. (Page 340)

DRS has initiated an effort to provide supported employment services, including customized employment services where appropriate, to students with disabilities prior to their exiting high school. While such referrals have taken place in the past, the number of referrals was small and the level of coordination between DRS, the school and the community provider agency was limited. (Page 342) In the most recent DRS needs assessment survey, the five highest ranked needs, based on the weighted score were: Job creation; Vocational training; Supported employment; Career exploration; and Customized employment. (Page 343) Another effort involves coordination with provider agencies also funded by the state developmental disabilities waiver program in an effort to identify individuals who are likely to benefit from VR funded supported employment services. DRS recently completed two pilot projects involving customized employment for persons with developmental disabilities. (Page 344)

## Braiding/Blending Resources

The Departments of Commerce and Child and Family Services are developing an initiative to expand career pathway services to older foster youth who are nearing age-out. Successful models for braiding and blending WIOA and Chafee Foster Care Funds are under consideration as a basis for Illinois' effort. (Page 118)

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- Aligning and coordinating the critical programs and services for Veterans. Employment Security provides veterans' employment representatives, who are fellow veterans and specialists in providing employment services. (Page 136)

## Section 188/Section 188 Guide

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. (Page 343)

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to

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the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. 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. (Page 198)

## DEI/Disability Resource Coordinators

One component is the set of Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) projects funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. These projects involve a variety of approaches to providing work experiences to youth with disabilities. In addition, DRS and Commerce are partnering on a set of innovative youth projects that will involve joint funding of work experiences and other approaches to employment for youth with disabilities. (Page 342)

DRS has worked effectively with Commerce around its DEI projects throughout the state. In one instance, DRS provided cooperative funding to support individuals with disabilities seeking to establish their own businesses. In another, DRS provided funding to community providers as part of an overall package including DEI funds. (Page 67)

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

- Commerce will support making local staff aware of best and promising practices and provide technical assistance to foster their integration into the regular WIOA local workflow. (Page 117)

Through the implementation of best practices from programs such as DEI, the state will develop policies through the IWIB policy process to ensure that there is a customer-centered approach of coordinating services that consider the additional needs of the targeted populations as identified in this plan. (Page 128)

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 (Page 133)

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 135)

Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Vocational Rehabilitation has worked effectively with Commerce around its DEI projects throughout the state. In one instance, Vocational Rehabilitation provided cooperative funding to support individuals with disabilities seeking to establish their own businesses. (Page 205)

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Coordination of the CSPD and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Relationship to IDEIA: DRS staff provide services annually to thousands of young people with disabilities, most of whom receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. (Pages 320,341)

## Other State Programs/Pilots that Support Competitive Integrated Employment

Innovative Workforce Pilots & Research Commerce is interested in pilot projects that integrate the workforce, education and economic development services that respond to the talent pipeline needs of businesses within regions. Priority consideration will be given to regional projects. Priority Populations Pilots Commerce is interested in regional projects that break down barriers to accessing job-driven training that will result in employment opportunities for all Illinois workers. (Page 224)

## Financial Literacy/Economic Advancement

*Provide Career Pathways for Economic Advancement* Commerce, Employment Security, ICCB and the Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) Interagency Data Team will continue to provide an analysis of economic and labor market information to the state and local economic development professionals. It is vital that local economic development staff have the most current macro-level data, but also work with us to share micro-level data and the vision they have for their communities. The Interagency Data Team will play an important coordinating role to foster better intra-regional communication (such as through WIOA regional planning) so that as many communities as possible within a region have a similar vision that can be used to leverage the efforts of all. The state and local economic development professionals play an important role in working with business to validate and refine the labor market information (LMI) based on the current needs of business in the region and local areas. (Page 150)

## Benefits

**SRC Comment:** SRC members believe that creation of a Workforce Development Unit within VR would be beneficial. This unit could concentrate on attracting small-to-large employers within the State and explain the benefits of hiring persons with disabilities. (Page 295)

DRS is participating in the job driven technical assistance program through the Institute for Community Inclusion. The goals of this project are to establish a business engagement strategy and to train VR staff to provide basic business engagement services, including those related to disability awareness, workplace accommodations and benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. (Page 308)

The DRS Staff Development Section (SDS) oversees the needs assessment, development, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of all training programs offered within DRS. SDS has three full-time trainers and a program manager in addition to two support staff. SDS is responsible for providing training to DRS VR staff as well as coordinating training from other sources and maintaining the training data base which tracks the number of training hours for each

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staff person. The following section lists training courses provided by the Staff Development Section in the last year, as well as statewide conferences attended by DRS staff with financial support from DRS. Training Provided by the DRS Staff Development Section Job Placement and Job Development Strategies; Case Progression and Documentation; Valuing Diversity in the Workplace; Conflict and Stress Management for Professionals; Working Effectively in Teams; Platinum Customer Service; Customer Service and Telephone Skills; Projecting a Professional Image; Sexual Harassment Prevention in the Work Place (re-titled The Respect Effect); Section 590 Subpart C: Training and Related Services (Webinar); Effective Communication & Conflict Management; Dealing with Difficult Behavior in the Workplace; Partnering with Autonomy Works (Webinar); The NET: A Model for Successful Employment Outcomes (Webinar); Team Building and Problem Solving; Case Notes: Styles, Structures and Time Management; Training Provided by External Training Resources Job Placement Skills; Social Security Benefits Training Conferences Supported by DRS Illinois Rehabilitation Association; Illinois Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired; Illinois Association of Agencies and Community Organizations for Migrant Advocacy; Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees; Latino Mental Health Conference. (Pages 317)

Benefits Planning Services: Help to manage Social Security benefits and plan to begin working 50.6 (Page 325)

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. (Page 334)

Many people with disabilities have low incomes, and about one-third of DRS participants receive Social Security disability benefits. Long-term unemployment is a frequent condition for many people with disabilities, as is a poor work history and a lack of basic skills, along with limited English proficiency. The DRS program seeks to mitigate these barriers through supportive services alongside provision of vocational services. Through participation in local workforce boards DRS expects to expand its awareness of supportive services available throughout the community and make these available to people with disabilities as needed. (Page 101)

## School to Work Transition

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 320)

These programs are described as business-led, one year school-to-work programs that are embedded within an actual workplace. The VR program has since expanded use of this model to other sites throughout the state. (Page 228)

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### Data Collection

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. (Page 304)

The state encourages regional and local partners to regularly and systemically analyze and validate complementary data through various forms of business engagement. The long-term goal is to develop the most robust data collection possible so that supply and demand projections benefit from as near to real-time information as possible. (Page 15)

Data collection methods and standards that are best practices in some core program partners and could be explored for use by other core program partners (e.g., how to account for participants who lack a Social Security number when reporting performance outcomes) (Page 189)

### Small Business/Entrepreneurship

The entrepreneurship training program also was the result of several years of planning and working with other entities including the University of Illinois at Chicago's assistive technology unit. The expansion of IPS programs is another example of an ongoing effort continuing to produce positive results. DRS has provided staff training and has utilized subject matter experts from the Dartmouth IPS center to build upon past success and maintain program quality. (Page 345)

Focus on Continuous Improvement and Innovation - The system should establish mechanisms for continual assessment of system performance and opportunities for improvement, as well as for encouraging innovation and disseminating best practices. This includes the continued enhancement of non-traditional methods for delivering education and training. Additionally, the growing role of entrepreneurship and its contributions to employment and economic growth will be an outcome of continuous improvement and innovation. (Page 80)

### Career Pathways

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

### Employment Networks

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 135)

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\* All enclosed information is cited directly from final state plan as of February 23, 2017

Find your local state plans here: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/state-plans/index.html>