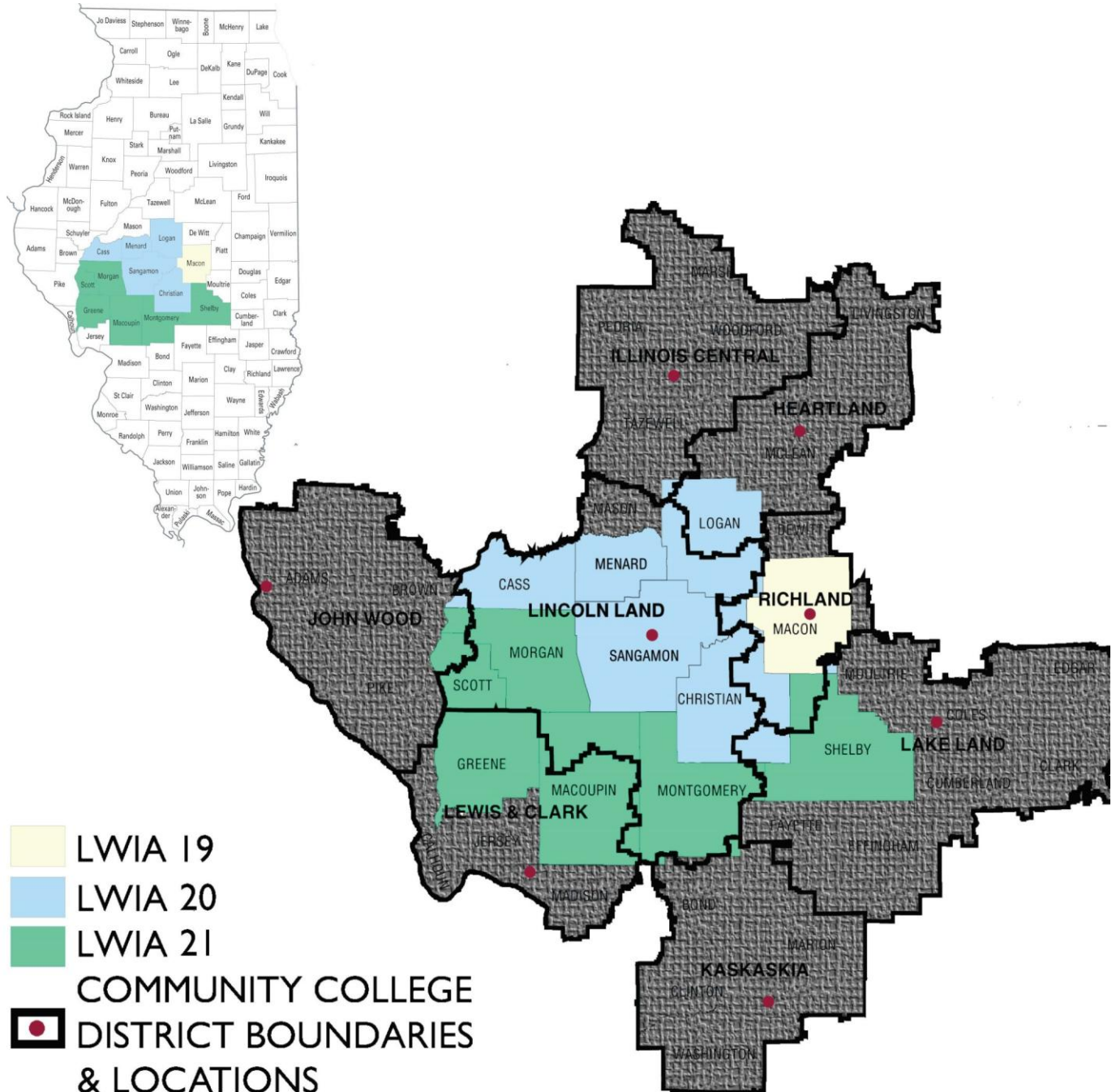


Central Economic Development Region 1

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – 2024 Regional and Local



Training Connecting Developing Workforce

Central Economic Development Region 1

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

2024 Regional and Local Plans

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Central Illinois Economic Development Region

2024 WIOA Plan

Executive Summary

The Workforce Boards of Local Areas 19, 20 and 21 in association with our partner agencies have produced this plan for the Central Economic Development Region (EDR – 1). The Plan was developed in accordance with the state and local area plans, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations, and the State of Illinois Regional and Local Planning Guide - updated November 2025. Our Boards are committed to creating workforce development strategies that promote the economic well-being of both employers and workers in the region. This plan formalizes the regional process for the Central Region to explore innovative means to better meet the needs of our customers and meet the educational, economic development and workforce development needs of the region.

Vision Statement:

This Plan incorporates the State of Illinois workforce development vision, which is to “meet employers, job seekers, and community members where they are, centering the customer experience in an interoperable, equitable, and accessible manner to ensure all customers achieve their goals”. EDR 1 will support employers and job seekers by;

- Utilizing a customer-centered approach.
- Advancing in responsiveness, inclusivity, and accessibility.
- Partnering with education systems to enhance coordination and collaboration.
- Increasing awareness of the Workforce Development System.
- Supporting development of frontline workers.

The Regional Plan also supports the Governor’s state goals and strategies.

1. Illinois’ Workforce Development System is an example of excellence in its approach and collaboration and customer service.
2. Illinois’ Workforce Development System will enhance employers’ abilities to hire and retain skilled workers that meet their emerging needs.
3. Illinois’ Workforce Development System will use customer-centered and data-informed practices to improve the quality of the jobseeker experience in pursuing fulfilling career pathways in a manner that is equitable and accessible.

Background:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act envisions a workforce system that better aligns workforce, education and economic development partners. The regional workforce efforts of Springfield, Decatur, Lincoln and Jacksonville as well as the rural communities in Cass, Christian, Greene, Macoupin, Menard, Montgomery, Scott and Shelby will benefit greatly from a unified workforce team that can act quickly to address workforce needs of both employers and job seekers.

WIOA emphasizes training that leads to credentials in targeted growth sectors of the economy. It encourages service coordination among education and workforce partner agencies and the creation and utilization of career pathways in the targeted sectors. The legislation is designed to help workers, including those with barriers, to access services that lead to employment in demand occupations. The Region's plan is based on coordination of workforce, education and economic development efforts that will meet the needs of both employers and job seekers in our area, and to do our best to remove inequities for the populations the system is meant to support.

Plan Development:

The Central Illinois Economic Development Regional Plan has been developed in accordance with WIOA and State of Illinois Regional Planning guidelines. The Central EDR will undertake the processes and strategies outlined in this plan over the next four years.

This Regional portion of the Plan includes the establishment of regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery agreements; the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors; the collection and analysis of regional labor market data; the coordination of administrative cost arrangements; the coordination of transportation and other supportive services; the coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers; and the process for negotiation of local levels of performance for performance accountability measures.

This Plan also includes the Local Plan components for LWIAs 19, 20 and 21. The local planning strategies include direct investments in economic, education and workforce training programs so that individuals have the skills to compete in the job market and that employers have a ready supply of skilled workers; applying job-driven strategies in the one-stop system; enable economic, education and workforce partners to build a skilled workforce through innovation in, and alignment of, employment, training and education programs.

Regional System Partners:

In accordance with the Governor’s vision for the State Workforce System, the Central EDR 1’s regional planning team included representatives from the following core and required partners:

- Capital Area Career Center
- City of Decatur
- City of Litchfield
- City of Springfield
- Community Action Programs of Central Illinois
- Decatur-Macon County Opportunities Corporation
- Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
- Department of Employment Security
- Department of Human Services – Division of Family and Community Service
- Department of Human Services – Division of Rehabilitation
- Economic Development Corporation of Decatur and Macon County
- Jacksonville Regional Economic Development Corp.
- Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance
- Lewis and Clark Community College
- Lincoln Land Community College
- National Able
- Regional Office of Career & Technical Education
- Richland Community College
- Sangamon County Department of Community Resources
- Springfield Public Schools District 186
- Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance
- United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS)
- University of Illinois Springfield Innovation Center
- West Central Development Council
- Workforce Investment Solutions of Macon and DeWitt

Chapter 1 – Economic and Workforce Analysis – Regional Component

This chapter must discuss how the region has collected and analyzed updated regional labor market information including the local planning requirements. Regional teams are encouraged to use the labor market information posted on <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning> to provide consistency in the data used for regional analysis throughout the state. This tool was the primary data source utilized for planning. Supplemental data sources included <https://cgfa.ilga.gov/Upload/2022MoodyEconomicForecast.pdf> and <https://www2.iccb.org/data/data-characteristics/>

A. Provide an analysis of the factors listed below:

Chapter 1 Section A Question 1a: What are the targeted industries, high-impact industry clusters, and in-demand occupations in the region?

The Central Region team met to discuss the data, targeted industries, clusters, and in-demand occupations. Logan Taira from Illinois Department of Employment Security discussed the current data and how it could be interpreted. After reviewing the data, along with group discussion, team members agreed that sector information presented for Healthcare and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Agriculture Production, and Transportation & Warehousing would be the focus of workforce development in the region. These industries are recognized as the four first tier targeted industries in our Region.

The table below lists these first-tier targeted industries and their associated high-impact industry clusters, as well as their associated in-demand occupations in the region. The industries, clusters and occupations were derived based on data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security. The data in the table lists those industries and occupations with the highest number of annual job openings in the Region. There are also other industry clusters and occupations that may be filled through the Region's focus on the targeted industry.

Targeted Industries	
Industries	Occupations
1. Healthcare and Social Assistance a. Ambulatory Health Care Services b. Hospitals c. Social Assistance d. Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	1. Registered Nurse 2. Licensed Practical Nurse 3. Nursing Assistant 4. Personal Care Aides 5. Home Health Aides 6. Medical Assistant

Targeted Industries	
Industries	Occupations
2. Manufacturing a. Food Manufacturing b. Machine Manufacturing c. Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	1. First Line Supervisors 2. Machinists 3. Welders 4. Mechanical Engineers
3. Agriculture Production a. Food & beverage b. Food Services/drinking places c. Textiles, apparel, and leather products d. Forestry and Fishing	2. Agricultural Science Teachers 3. Agricultural Inspectors 4. Agricultural Equipment Operators 5. Agricultural & Food Science Technicians
4. Transportation & Warehousing a. Truck Transportation b. Warehousing and Storage c. Support Activities for Transportation d. Couriers and Messengers	1. Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers 2. Logistics Operations Specialist 3. Load Planners 4. Supply Chain Analyst 5. Light Truck Drivers

NAICS Title	2020 Employment	Projected 2030 Employment	Employment Change 2020-2030	Annual Compound Growth Rate
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	230,848	239,081	8233	0.35%
Self Employed Workers	10,147	9,139	-1008	-1.04%
Agricultural Production, Total	7,868	8,010	142	0.18%
Natural Resources & Mining	447	451	4	0.09%
Construction	8,719	8,973	254	0.29%
Manufacturing	23,596	24,250	654	0.27%
Wholesale Trade	8,407	7,916	-491	-0.60%
Retail Trade	23,348	23,343	-5	0.00%
Utilities	1,787	1,805	18	0.10%
Transportation & Warehousing	7,797	7,894	97	0.12%
Information	2,799	3,046	247	0.85%
Financial Activities	11,300	10,485	-815	-0.75%
Professional & Business Services	15,421	18,260	2839	1.70%
Educational Services	19,149	20,110	961	0.49%
Health Care & Social Assistance	36,022	36,300	278	0.08%
Leisure & Hospitality	17,297	21,420	4123	2.16%
Other Services	10,931	11,881	950	0.84%
Government	25,813	25,798	-15	-0.01%

Leading
Maturing
Emerging

Data for the region indicates that Natural Resources & Mining, Transportation and Warehousing, Professional & Business Services, Educational Services, and Leisure & Hospitality are emerging industry sectors. Healthcare & Social Assistance are leading while Wholesale Trade, Retail Trade, and Government are maturing. The partners also recognize that although the data does not list Information Technology or Construction as either leading, maturing or emerging industry sectors in the EDR there are still numerous jobs in those sectors. Almost all industries have occupations requiring information technology workers.

Because of these industries high growth projections, we are identifying these as Tier 2 targets of opportunity for the Region. Some of the in-demand jobs in these top tier industries are entry-level, require a minimum of a high school diploma and are lower wage career areas; however, for youth entering the workforce, these jobs provide experience to begin building a work history, earning a standard living wage and are first steps in a career pathway.

Table 1: Industry Employment Projections in Major Sectors of Central EDR.
Source: IDES, 2022-2032 Industry Employment Projections

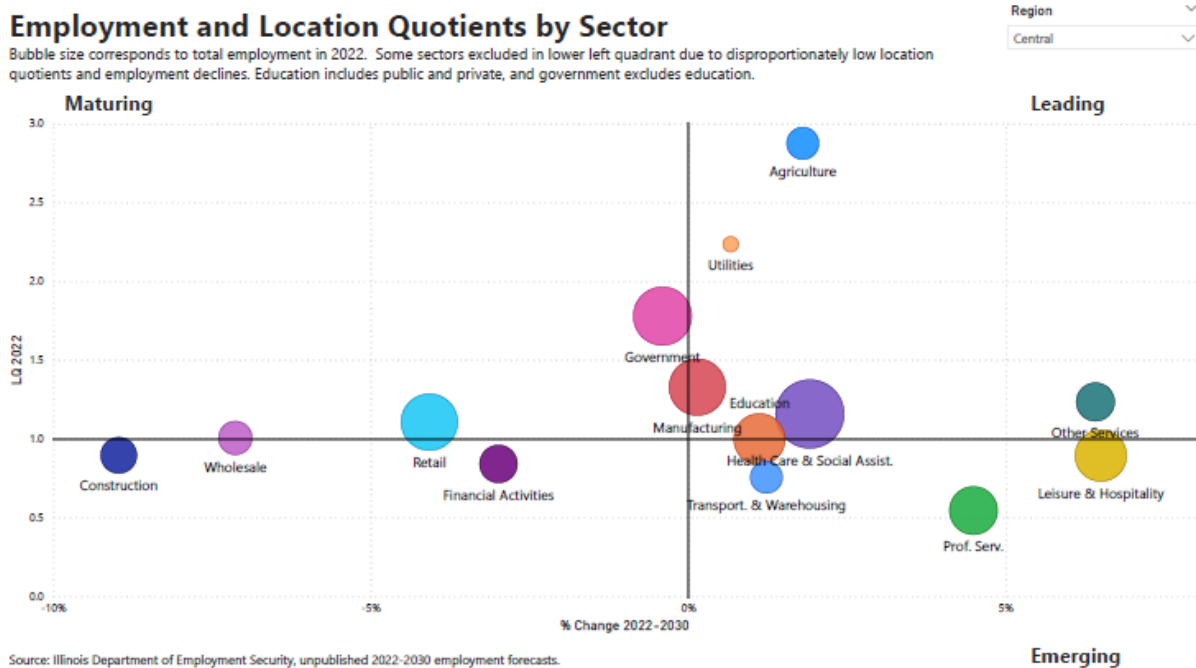
Blue rows denote leading industries, gold rows denote emerging industries and gray rows denote maturing industries.

NAICS Title	2022 Em- ployment	2032 Em- ployment	Empl. Change	Annual Compound Growth Rate
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	240,684	238,531	-2153	-0.09
Self Employed Workers	9,536	9,079	-457	-0.49
Agricultural Production	8,518	8,618	100	0.12
Natural Resources and Mining	435	432	-3	-0.07
Construction	9,886	9,625	-261	-0.27
Manufacturing	24,473	24,564	91	0.04
Wholesale Trade	8,556	8,625	69	0.08
Retail Trade	24,353	24,041	-312	-0.13
Transportation and Warehousing	7,824	8,021	211	0.25
Utilities	1,789	1,803	14	0.08
Information	4,216	4,395	179	0.42
Financial Activities	10,771	10,295	-476	-0.45
Professional and Business Services	17,644	17,243	-401	-0.23
Educational Services, Private and Pub.	19,882	18,884	-998	-0.51
Health Care and Social Asstc., Private and Pub.	35,614	35,975	361	0.10
Leisure and Hospitality	20,094	20,446	352	0.17
Other Services	11,174	11,180	6	0.01
Government	25,919	25,305	-614	-0.24

The classification of target industries remains unchanged from the original plan: Transportation and Warehousing is classified as an emerging industry, while all other sectors are classified as leading industries. Based on the Q2 2025 CES data (discussed in Section A.1.c below), Manufacturing has experienced employment declines both between 2019 and 2025 and between 2023 and 2025. However, its LQ has continued to increase, indicating that employment is falling nationwide but at a faster rate than in the region. Manufacturing accounts for nearly 10% of all jobs in the area according to the 2022 projection estimates, serves as a key industry of specialization for the region, and is identified as a high-impact industry in the Statewide Economic Growth Plan 2024. Therefore, its inclusion as a target industry remains justified in 2026.

Chapter 1 Section A Question 1b: What industries and occupations have favorable location quotients?

The industries with the most favorable location quotients are Manufacturing, Education, Government, and Healthcare and Social Assistance. Occupations within the region's targeted industries that have a high location quotient are (Manufacturing) Machinists, Packaging/Filling Food Batch Makers, Production and Operating Workers; and (Healthcare) Registered Nurses, Personal Care Aides and Nursing Assistants.



According to the revised 2022-2032 Central EDR 1 Industry Projections, the only notable adjustment is:

Educational Services: the location quotient shifted slightly to just below 1 after adjustments. This change is minimal and does not affect previous interpretations.

The updated plot below now includes **Natural Resources and Mining, Information, and Self-Employed Workers**. All three sectors have LQs just below 1, indicating they are regionally underrepresented compared to national employment levels.

Figure 1: Central Region Employment Location Quotients by Sector.

Source: 2022-2032 Industry Employment Projections, IDES

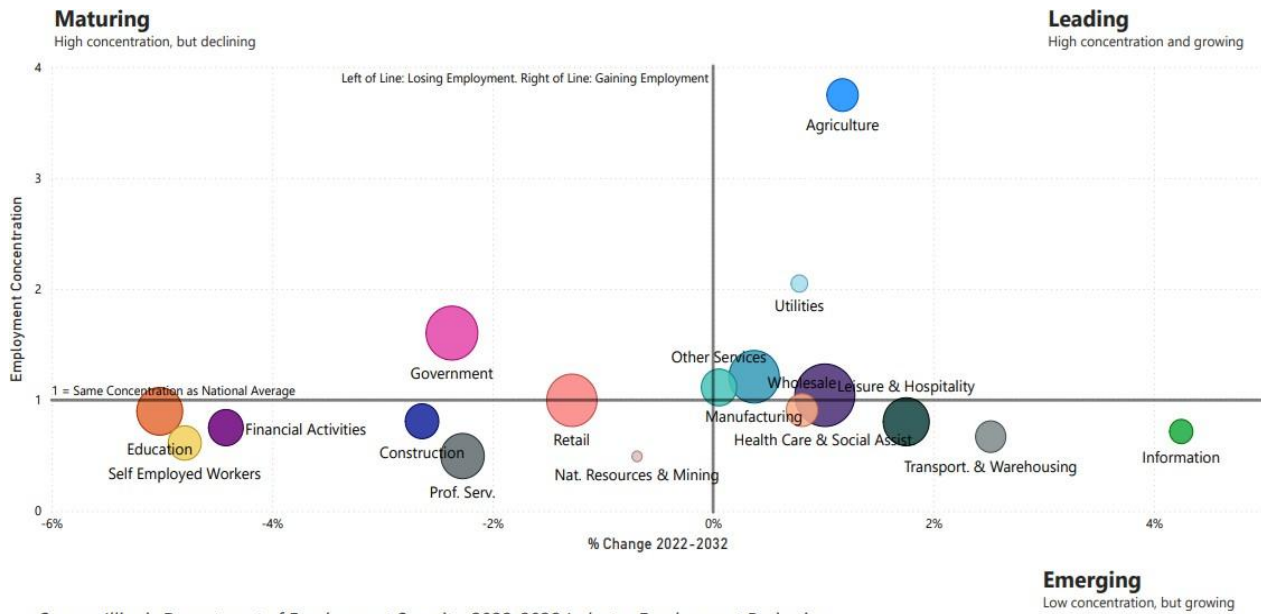


Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between employment change (Q2 2023–2025) and the change in location quotient across NAICS supersectors in Central EDR. The size of each dot is proportional to its LQ value.

Figure 2: Central Region: Changes in Employment and Location Quotients by Sector

Source: Current Employment Statistics, IDES

LQs represent Q2 2025; changes calculated relative to Q2 2023



The updated LQs remain largely consistent with the 2022 projection estimates. Industries with improvements in LQs include:

- **Construction**
- **Manufacturing**
- **Trade, Transportation, and Utilities**
- **Financial Activities**
- **Government**

Out of those, two industries have the most favorable LQs in the area: **Manufacturing** and **Government**. The **Private Education and Health Services** sector experienced a slight decline in LQ, despite positive employment growth. This suggests that while the sector is expanding locally, it is growing at a slower pace compared to the national level. This trend aligns with earlier projections, which anticipated declines in **Educational Services** employment but gains in **Health Care and Social Assistance**.

Although the **Other Services** sector maintains a favorable LQ, both its LQ and employment levels have shown negative dynamics.

Chapter 1 Section A Question 1c: What industries and occupations have favorable demand projections based on growth?

The industries

with favorable demand projections are: Healthcare and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Education, Agriculture, and Other Services. Occupations related to the targeted industries are (Healthcare) Registered Nurses, Personal Care Aides and Nursing Assistants, (Manufacturing) Food Manufacturing, Machine Manufacturing, and Transportation Equipment Manufacturing, (Agriculture Production) Food & beverage, Food Services/drinking places, and Textiles, apparel, and leather products, (Transportation and Warehousing) Truck Transportation, Warehousing and Storage, and Support Activities for Transportation.

According to the revised 2022-2032 Central EDR Industry Projections, favorable demand has been anticipated among the following sectors: • Agriculture • Manufacturing • Wholesale Trade • Transportation and Warehousing • Utilities • Information • Leisure and Hospitality • Health Care and Social Assistance • Other Services.

Manufacturing Sector

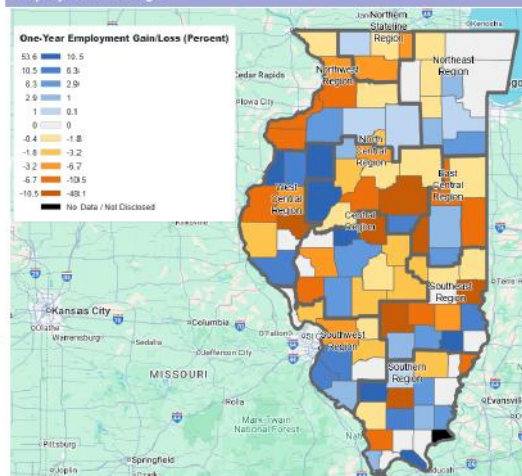
Q4 2023- Q4 2024 % Employment Change

Component Industries

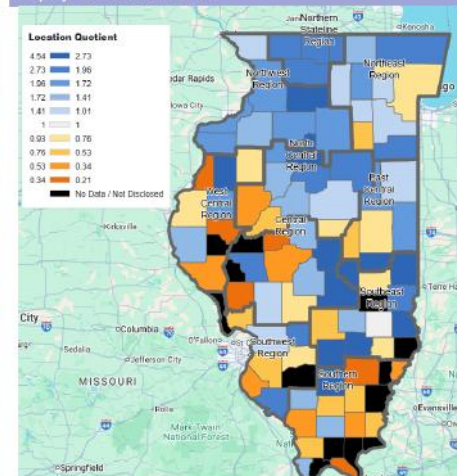
(NAICS 31-33)

- Food (NAICS 311)
- Beverage and Tobacco Products (NAICS 312)
- Textile Mills (NAICS 313)
- Textile Product Mills (NAICS 314)
- Apparel (NAICS 315)
- Leather and Allied Products (NAICS 316)
- Wood Products (NAICS 321)
- Paper (NAICS 322)
- Printing (NAICS 323)
- Petroleum and Coal Products (NAICS 324)
- Chemicals (NAICS 325)
- Plastics and Rubber Products (NAICS 326)
- Nonmetallic Mineral Products (NAICS 327)
- Primary Metals (NAICS 331)
- Fabricated Metal Products (NAICS 332)
- Machinery (NAICS 333)
- Computer and Electronic Products (NAICS 334)
- Electrical Equipment and Components (NAICS 335)
- Transportation Equipment (NAICS 336)
- Furniture (NAICS 337)
- Miscellaneous (NAICS 339)

Employment Change



Employment Concentration



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q4 2023 & Q4 2024. Retrieved from the Illinois Employment Business System on Illinois WorkNet.

Trade, Transportation, and Utilities Sector

Q4 2023- Q4 2024 % Employment Change

Component Industries

Utilities (NAICS 22)

Wholesale Trade (NAICS 42)

- Durable Goods (NAICS 423)
- Nondurable Goods (NAICS 424)
- Electronic Markets (NAICS 425)

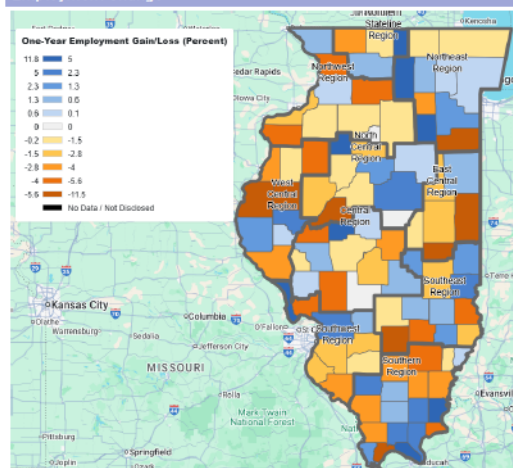
Retail Trade (NAICS 44-45)

- Motor Vehicle and Parts (NAICS 441)
- Furniture and Home Furnishings (NAICS 442)
- Electronics and Appliances (NAICS 443)
- Building and Garden Equipment (NAICS 444)
- Food and Beverage (NAICS 445)
- Health / Personal Products (NAICS 446)
- Gasoline Stations (NAICS 447)
- Clothing and Accessories (NAICS 448)
- Sporting Goods & Hobbies (NAICS 451)
- General Merchandise (NAICS 452)
- Miscellaneous (NAICS 453)
- Nonstore Retailers (NAICS 454)

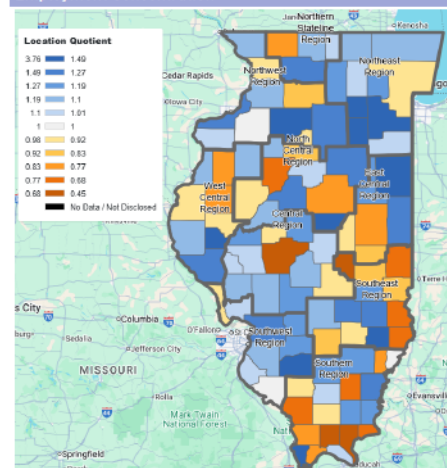
Transportation and Warehousing (NAICS 48-49)

- Air (NAICS 481)
- Rail (NAICS 482)
- Water (NAICS 483)
- Truck (NAICS 484)
- Transit and Ground Passenger (NAICS 485)
- Pipeline (NAICS 486)
- Scenic and Sightseeing (NAICS 487)
- Support Activities (NAICS 488)
- Postal Service (NAICS 491)
- Couriers and Messengers (NAICS 492)
- Warehousing and Storage (NAICS 493)

Employment Change



Employment Concentration

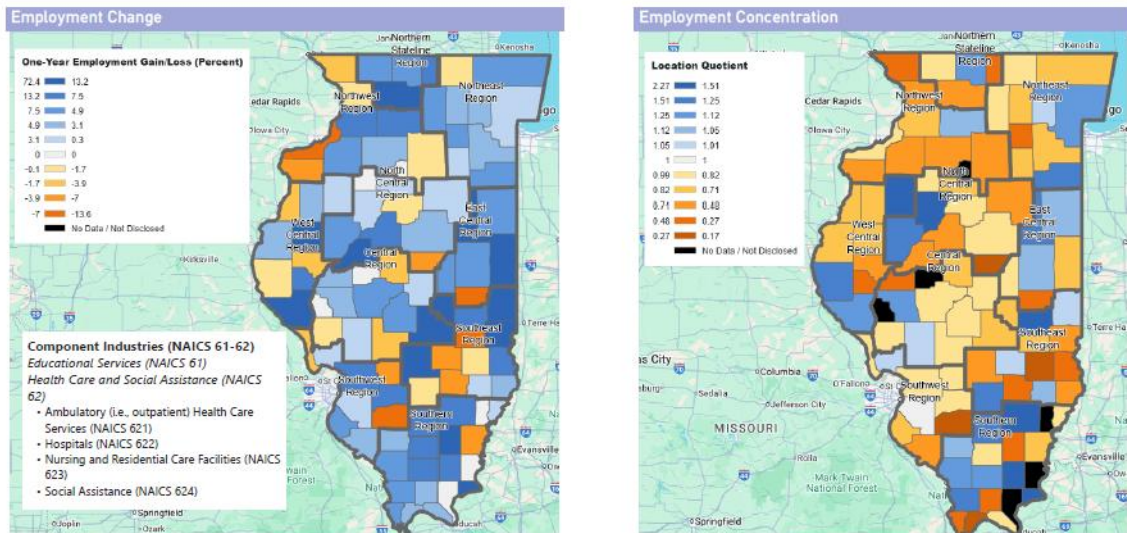


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q4 2023 & Q4 2024. Retrieved from the Illinois Employment Business System on Illinois WorkNet.

Education and Health Services Sector

Q4 2023- Q4 2024 % Employment Change & Q4 2024 Employment Location Quotient

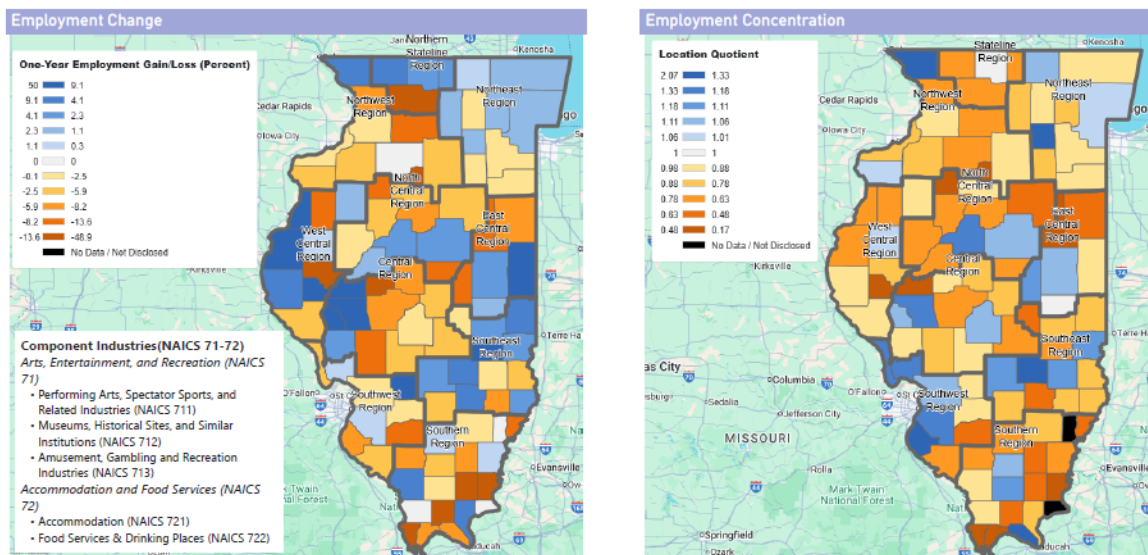
It is not possible to dissect this sector into health care or education alone in some counties, due to suppression.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q4 2023 & Q4 2024. Retrieved from the Illinois Employment Business System on Illinois WorkNet.

Leisure and Hospitality Sector

Q4 2023- Q4 2024 % Employment Change & Q4 2024 Employment Location Quotient



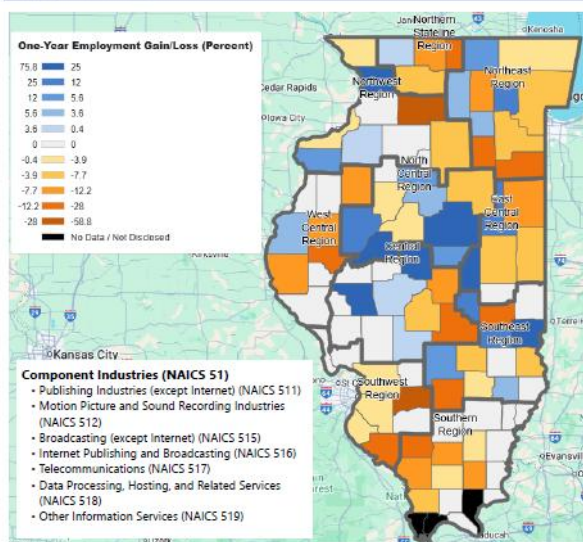
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q4 2023 & Q4 2024. Retrieved from the Illinois Employment Business System on Illinois WorkNet.

Information Sector

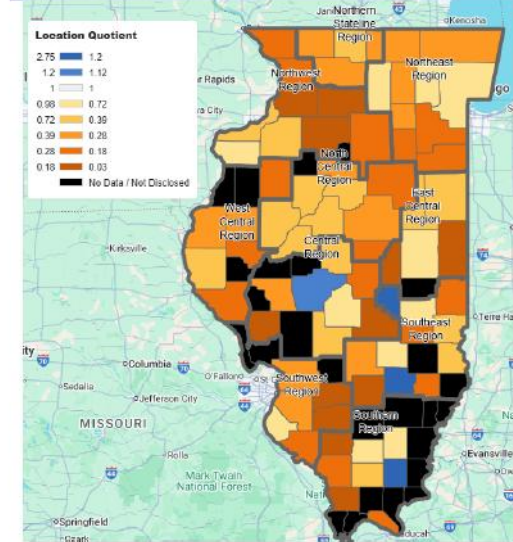
Q4 2023- Q4 2024 % Employment Change & Q4 2024 Employment Location Quotient

Most IT occupations (e.g., programmers) are employed outside of the Information sector.

Employment Change



Employment Concentration



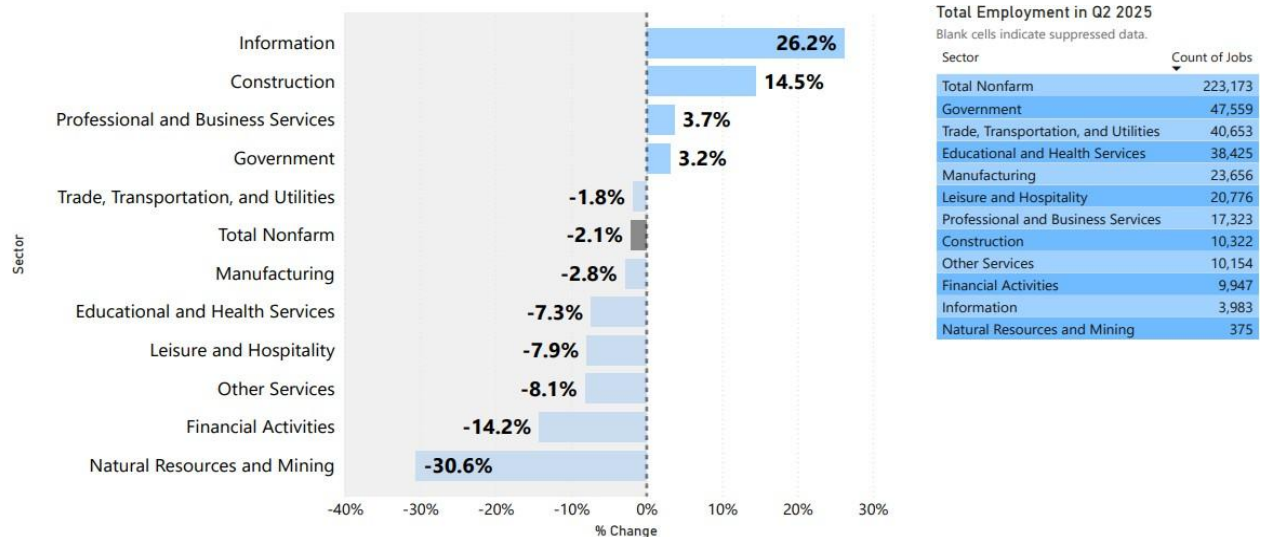
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q4 2023 & Q4 2024. Retrieved from the Illinois Employment Business System on Illinois WorkNet.

By 2025–2026, however, some of those trends in employment have not emerged. The Q2 2019 to Q2 2025 CES comparison shows that the only sectors with job growth are • Information • Construction • Professional and Business Services • Government.

Figure 3: % Change in Employment by Sector in Central Region, Q2 2019 - Q2 2025

Source: Current Employment Statistics, IDES

2026 Central Regional Plan Data Packet



Total Employment in Q2 2025

Blank cells indicate suppressed data.

Sector	Count of Jobs
Total Nonfarm	223,173
Government	47,559
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	40,653
Educational and Health Services	38,425
Manufacturing	23,656
Leisure and Hospitality	20,776
Professional and Business Services	17,323
Construction	10,322
Other Services	10,154
Financial Activities	9,947
Information	3,983
Natural Resources and Mining	375

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Current Employment Statistics, respective years.

More recently, positive employment change between Q2 2023 and Q2 2025 has been recorded only in Construction, Private

Educational and Health Services, and Government sectors (see Figure 2.)

Given that projections do not provide the same industry breakdown as CES, note that current information on performance of more detailed industries within NAICS super-sectors (Wholesale Trade, Transportation and Warehousing, Utilities within Trade, Transportation, and Utilities, for example) is not available.

Table 4 summarizes the top 18 detailed SOC occupations ranked by projected employment growth, based on the Occupational Employment Projections for 2022–2032 in the Central EDR. Seven occupations tied at five job opening due to growth annually share the 19th position and are therefore omitted.

The following occupations from the top 18 are a significant part of the targeted industry clusters, each representing an employment share above 0.5% within the fastest-growing sub-industries:

- **Agricultural Production:** *Truck Drivers, Light; Laborers/Freight/Stock & Material Movers, Hand; Farmers, Ranchers & Other Ag Managers; Animal Caretakers; Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer; Market Research Analysts & Specialists.*
- **Manufacturing:** *Cooks, Restaurant; Stockers & Order Fillers; Truck Drivers, Light; Laborers/Freight/Stock & Material Movers, Hand; Food Batchmakers; Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer; Market Research Analysts & Specialists.*
- **Transportation and Warehousing:** *Stocker & Order Fillers; Truck Drivers, Light; Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer; Laborers/Freight/Stock & Material Movers, Hand.*
- **Healthcare and Social Assistance:** *Cooks, Restaurant; Nurse Practitioners; Medical & Health Services Managers; Medical Assistants; Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners.*

Table 4: Top Occupations by Projected Average Annual Job Openings due to Growth.

Source: IDES, 2022-2032 Occupation Employment Projections

Occupation	Employment		Avg. Annual Job Openings	
	2022	2032	Growth	Total
Cooks, Restaurant	1,979	2,336	36	359
Stocker & Order Fillers	3,303	3,588	28	579
Software Developers	1,381	1,576	20	98
Nurse Practitioners	485	681	20	46
Medical & Health Services Managers	732	886	15	71
Financial Managers	1,368	1,486	12	107
Truck Drivers, Light	1,602	1,709	11	183
Laborers/Freight/Stock & Material Movers, Hand	4,797	4,903	11	637
Emergency Medical Technicians	486	585	10	47
Medical Assistants	1,249	1,342	9	174
Farmers, Ranchers & Other Ag Managers	6,759	6,841	8	709
Food Batchmakers	944	1,028	8	154
Paramedics	305	371	7	22
Animal Caretakers	468	535	7	98
Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer	3,043	3,115	7	326
Market Research Analysts & Specialists	992	1,053	6	98
Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	1,574	1,634	6	234
Exercise Trainers & Group Fitness Instructors	570	626	6	115

Chapter 1 Section A Question 1d: What industries and occupations have favorable demand projections based on replacements?

Growth by

Replacement

Occupation	BY 2020	PY2030	Replacement	Transfer	Total Openings
Other Management Occupations	11,189	11,718	521	496	1,017
Cashiers	5,995	5,776	501	564	1,065
Home Health, Personal Care & Psych Aides/Nursing Assistants/Orderlies	6,082	6,031	388	343	771
Other Office & Adm. Support Workers	6,463	6,089	331	376	707
Building Cleaning & Pest Control Workers	4,966	4,951	315	341	656
Farmers, Ranchers & Other Ag Managers	6,259	6,367	389	219	608
Office Clerks, General	5,554	5,257	295	320	615
Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	4,573	4,037	219	240	459
Financial Clerks	3,910	3,584	188	212	400
Home Health & Personal Care Aides	3,211	3,314	209	185	394
Back-Office Services	20,500	18,967	1,033	1,148	2,181

The above chart shows the occupations that have favorable demand projections based on replacements. Top occupations with high demand in the targeted sectors include Other Management Occupations, Cashiers, Home Health, Personal Care & Psych Aides/Nursing Assistants/Orderlies, Other Office & Administrative Support Workers, and Building, Cleaning & Pest Control Workers.

EDR 1 recognizes that office assistants, administrative assistants, support workers, office clerks, secretaries and financial clerks are in high demand with a total of 2,181 jobs. The jobs will be a high priority for EDR 1, with the caution of whether these occupations are on the DCEO Demand Occupations Training List. Some of these occupations do not make a sustainable wage, however they can be considered as an entry level occupation for participants to start out with furthering their training in their career pathway of choice.

In consulting with the LMI Specialist at IDES, it should be noted that:

Total openings = Growth Openings + Separations

Definitions:

Growth Openings – difference between the base and projection year employment

Separations – the need to replace those who have exited the labor market, or have changed occupational fields/categories = Exits + Transfers

Industry employment projections do not distinguish between growth and replacement in employment change, so no additions can be made. The focus, therefore, shifts to occupational employment projections. **Annual average job openings due to replacement** are openings from *exits* (such as retirements or changes to a different occupation).

Table 5 presents the top 20 occupations by projected average annual job openings due to replacement in Central EDR. Note that some of the occupations from the Table 4 section A.1.c reappear in Table 5. The following occupations from the top 20 based on replacement are a significant part of the targeted industry clusters, each representing an employment share above 0.5% within the fastest-growing sub-industries:

- **Agricultural Production:** – *Farmers, Ranchers & Other Ag Managers – Office Clerks, General – Janitors and Cleaners, Ex. Maids and Housekeepers – Laborers and Freight, Stock & Material Movers, Hand – Customer Service Representatives – General & Operations Managers – Secretaries & Admin. Assts., Ex. Legal, Medical, and Exec. – Bookkeeping and Accounting Auditing Clerks – Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer.*
- **Manufacturing:** – *Cashiers – Fast Food & Counter Workers – Retail Salespersons – Office Clerks, General – Waiters & Waitresses – Janitors and Cleaners, Ex. Maids and Housekeepers – Customer Service Representatives – General & Operations Managers – Cooks, Restaurant – Stockers & Order Fillers – Laborers and Freight, Stock & Material Movers, Hand – Secretaries & Admin. Assts., Ex. Legal, Medical, and Exec. – Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks – Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer*
- **Transportation and Warehousing:** – *Office Clerks, General – Janitors and Cleaners, Ex. Maids and Housekeepers – Customer Service Representatives – Stockers & Order Fillers – General & Operations Managers – Secretaries & Admin. Assts., Ex. Legal, Medical, and Exec. – Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks – Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer – Laborers and Freight, Stock & Material Movers, Hand*
- **Healthcare and Social Assistance:** – *Office Clerks, General – Home Health & Personal Care Aides – Janitors and Cleaners, Ex. Maids and Housekeepers – Registered Nurses – Customer Service Representatives – Nursing Assistants – General & Operations Managers – Secretaries & Admin. Assts., Ex. Legal, Medical, and Exec. – Cooks, Restaurant – Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks – Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners*

Table 5: Top Occupations by Projected Average Annual Job Openings due to Replacement.
Source: IDES, 2022-2032 Occupation Employment Projections

Occupation	Employment		Avg. Annual Job Openings	
	2022	2032	Replacement	Total
Cashiers	6,172	5,578	565	1,075
Fast Food & Counter Workers	5,006	4,990	552	1,139
Farmers, Ranchers & Other Ag Managers	6,759	6,841	475	709
Retail Salespersons	5,384	5,363	353	776
Office Clerks, General	5,031	4,512	288	516
Home Health & Personal Care Aides	3,252	3,139	256	458
Waiters & Waitresses	2,946	2,803	247	580
Janitors/Cleaners, Ex.Maids/Housekeepers	3,464	3,391	239	470
Laborers/Freight/Stock & Material Movers, Hand	4,797	4,903	232	637
Registered Nurses	6,535	6,552	217	354
Customer Service Representatives	3,927	3,738	214	495
Stockers & Order Fillers	3,303	3,588	214	579
Nursing Assistants	2,713	2,700	171	382
General & Operations Managers	6,445	6,493	161	513
Secretaries & Admin. Assts., Ex. Legal/Medical/Exec.	2,855	2,398	153	245
Cooks, Restaurant	1,979	2,336	147	359
Bookkeeping/Accounting/Auditing Clerks	2,337	2,105	144	234
Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer	3,043	3,115	139	326
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	2,313	2,214	129	253
Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	1,574	1,634	120	234

Exits - leaving the labor force entirely *Transfers – change in occupational field/category, i.e., permanently leaving an occupation to go to a different field, or to a different occupational category (defined as a different Major SOC group)* **Chapter 1 Section A Question 1e: What industries are considered mature but still important to the economy?**

According to the data provided by Illinois Department of Employment Security, EDR 1’s maturing industries include Wholesale Trade, Retail Trade, and Government. Modest job losses are projected in the maturing Wholesale and Retail Trade sectors. Agriculture and Utilities sectors are the most significantly concentrated industries in the Central Region. Although, the Healthcare and Social Assistance and Other Services sectors also maintain industry concentrations above the national average.

Table 1 in Section A.1.a provides a classification of industries based on LQ and employment growth. This classification includes **Retail Trade** and **Government** as maturing industries in Central EDR. Adjusting for the current performance of Central EDR industries (Sections A.1.b and A.1.c), **Manufacturing** and **Other Services** can now be classified as maturing or mature.

Given the long-term and short-term employment gains in **Government**, this industry could instead be classified as leading for the area.

NAICS Title	2020 Employment	Projected 2030 Employment	Employment Change 2020-2030	Annual Compound Growth Rate
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	230,848	239,081	8233	0.35%
Self Employed Workers	10,147	9,139	-1008	-1.04%
Agricultural Production, Total	7,868	8,010	142	0.18%
Natural Resources & Mining	447	451	4	0.09%
Construction	8,719	8,973	254	0.29%
Manufacturing	23,596	24,250	654	0.27%
Wholesale Trade	8,407	7,916	-491	-0.60%
Retail Trade	23,348	23,343	-5	0.00%
Utilities	1,787	1,805	18	0.10%
Transportation & Warehousing	7,797	7,894	97	0.12%
Information	2,799	3,046	247	0.85%
Financial Activities	11,300	10,485	-815	-0.75%
Professional & Business Services	15,421	18,260	2839	1.70%
Educational Services	19,149	20,110	961	0.49%
Health Care & Social Assistance	36,022	36,300	278	0.08%
Leisure & Hospitality	17,297	21,420	4123	2.16%
Other Services	10,931	11,881	950	0.84%
Government	25,813	25,798	-15	-0.01%

Leading
Maturing
Emerging

Chapter 1 Section A Question 1f: What industries and occupations are considered emerging in the regional economy?

Occupations Associated with Emerging Industries	
Industry	Occupations
Transportation & Warehousing	• Transportation & Material Moving Occupations • Material Moving Workers • Motor Vehicle Operators
Educational Services	• Education, Training & Library Occupations • Pre/Primary/Second/Special Ed. School Teachers • Other Education, training & Library Occupations
Natural Resources & Mining	• Water Management and Conservation • Conservation Technicians • Environmental Technicians/Specialist

Occupations Associated with Emerging Industries	
Industry	Occupations
Professional & Business Services	• Accountants and Auditors • Operations Managers • Laborers/Freight/Stock & Material Movers
Leisure and Hospitality	• Food Preparation & Serving Occupations • Food & Beverage Serving Workers • Cooks & Food Preparation Workers

Table 1 in Section A.1.a provides a classification of industries based on LQ and employment growth. This classification identifies **Wholesale Trade, Transportation and Warehousing, Information**, and **Leisure and Hospitality** as emerging industries in Central EDR.

Based on the current performance of Central EDR industries (Sections A.1.b and A.1.c), **Information** may now be considered maturing due to recent employment declines. **Leisure and Hospitality** has experienced both long-term and short-term employment losses instead, placing it in a position of weakening employment.

Detailed data on subsectors within the **Trade, Transportation, and Utilities** industry are not available. However, its overall performance aligns with the projected decline in **Retail Trade**. Therefore, **Wholesale Trade** and **Transportation and Warehousing** may still be considered emerging.

Finally, the **Construction** sector, which has a relatively low employment concentration in Central EDR, has experienced employment growth instead of the projected decline, placing it in the emerging category as well.

Chapter 1 Section A Question 1g: What is the projected regional key in-demand occupations

The following are leading occupations in EDR1 Projected to still be In-Demand in 2030.

Projected In-Demand Occupations
Occupations
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Occupations Health Diagnosing & Treatment Practitioners Healthcare Support Occupations Home Health, Personal Care & Psych Aides/Nursing Assistants/Orderlies Farming, Fishing & Forestry Occupations Agricultural Workers Extraction Workers Production Occupations Other Production Occupations Food Processing Workers Assemblers & Fabricators Textile, apparel, and furnishings workers Vehicle and mobile equipment mechanics, installers, and repairers Motor vehicle operators Counselors, social workers, and other community and social service specialists

Additional groups listed in Tables 6 and 7 may also be considered as complementary priorities.

For more detailed occupations, it is recommended to review Tables 3, 4, and 5. At a minimum, the following occupations should be considered key priorities for sectors outside of **Manufacturing**:

- *Farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural managers*
- *Truck drivers, light*
- *Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand*
- *Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers*
- *Registered nurses*
- *Nursing assistants*

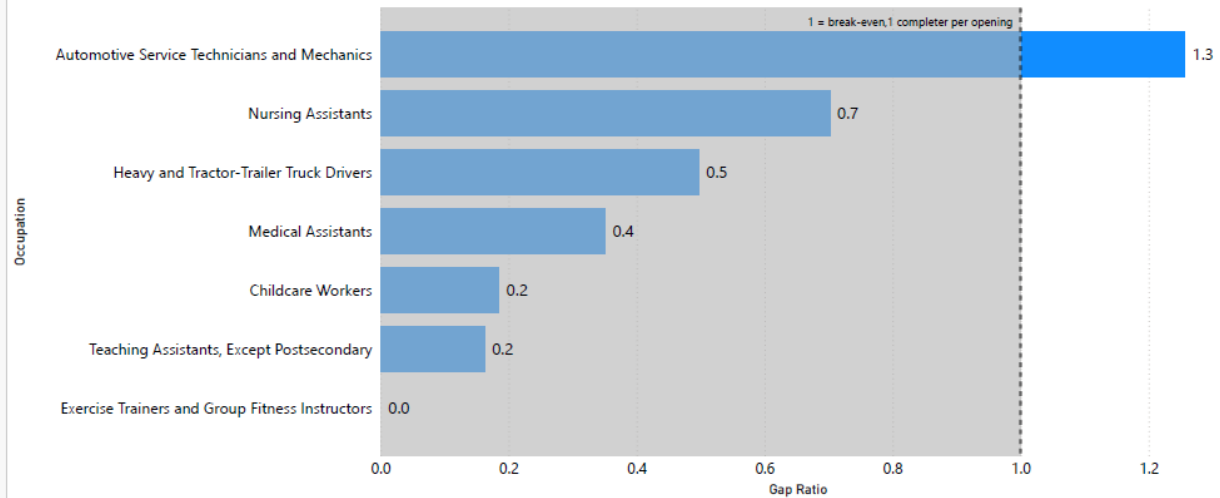
Manufacturing requires specialized, industry-specific occupations. Therefore, economy-wide top occupations based on projections are less relevant for this analysis. However, the following occupations exhibit high projected annual job openings in Central EDR and should also be considered key priorities:

- *Packaging and filling machine operators and tenders*
- *Miscellaneous assemblers and fabricators*

Chapter 1 Section A Question 1h: What sources of supply and demand data were used to determine the targeted industries occupations and skills?

Central Region Supply Gaps for Occupations Requiring a Certificate or License

The supply gap ratio is a proxy measure that provides insight on how closely supply aligns with demand for selected occupations. The calculation of the ratio is supply / demand. In this case, the supply is the number of program completions in the region associated with the occupation and the demand is the estimated number of regional job openings. A gap ratio of one indicates one completer per projected job opening. Gaps lower than one indicate more job openings than completers, and gaps greater than 1 indicate more completers than openings.

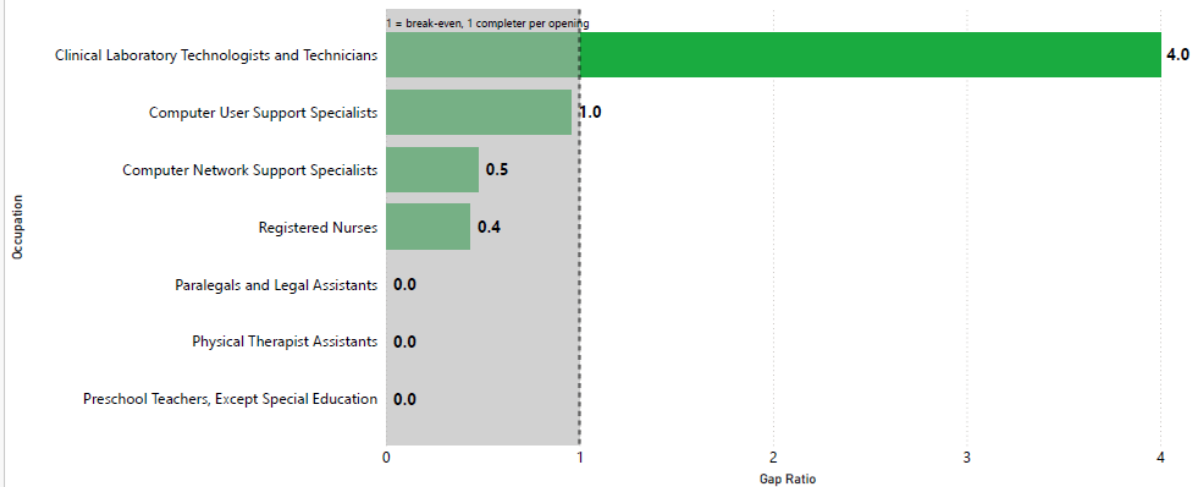


Completers do not include most apprenticeships and true OJT provided solely by employers.

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Board of Higher Education, & Lightcast, 2024.

Central Region Supply Gaps for Occupations Requiring an Associate's Degree

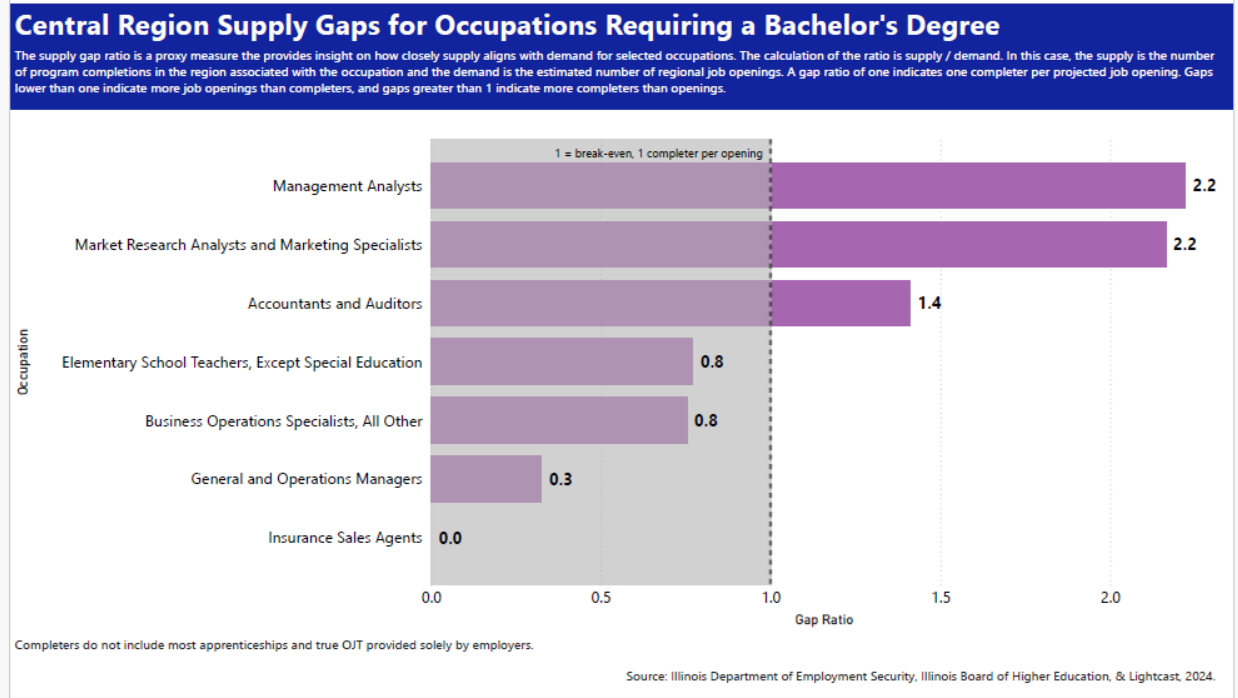
The supply gap ratio is a proxy measure that provides insight on how closely supply aligns with demand for selected occupations. The calculation of the ratio is supply / demand. In this case, the supply is the number of program completions in the region associated with the occupation and the demand is the estimated number of regional job openings. A gap ratio of one indicates one completer per projected job opening. Gaps lower than one indicate more job openings than completers, and gaps greater than 1 indicate more completers than openings.



Completers do not include most apprenticeships and true OJT provided solely by employers.

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Board of Higher Education, & Lightcast, 2024.

A. Provide an Analysis of the:
2: Employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(1)(ii));



The sources used are from the Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Board of Higher Education, & Lightcast, 2023. The above graphs shows the supply gap ratio and how supply aligns with demand for selected occupations based on education completers. Similarly, gap ratios greater than 1 might not necessarily translate to employers easily filling job openings.

The employment needs for industries are presented in Table 1 in Section A.1.a.

The employment needs for the top 11 occupations are shown in Table 6 in Section A.1.g, which is compatible with the original plan's table.

Emerging Key Sector Occupations

Occupation	BY 2020	PY2030	Change	Change %
Food Preparation & Serving Occupations	16,319	20,399	4,080	25%
Food & Beverage Serving Workers	9,240	11,484	2,244	24.29%
Transportation & Material Moving Occupations	17,975	19,344	1,369	7.62%
Material Moving Workers	9,745	10,831	1,086	11.14%

Cooks & Food Preparation Workers	4,125	5,174	1,049	25.43%
Education, Training & Library Occupations	13, 797	14,684	887	6.43%
Pre/Primary/Second/Special Ed. School Teachers	7,060	7,520	460	6.52%
Other Food Preparation & Serving Related Workers	1,605	2,023	418	26.04%
Motor Vehicle Operators	6,652	6,906	254	3.82%
Other Education, Training & Library Occs	2,925	3,088	163	5.57%
Back Office Services	18,967	20,500	1,533	8.08%

The above chart shows the emerging key sector occupations in EDR 1. The Top emerging occupations include Food Preparation & Serving Occupations, Food & Beverage Serving Workers, Transportation & Material Moving Occupations, Material Moving Workers, and Cooks & Food Preparation Workers.

A. Provide an Analysis of the:

3. The knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(2));

Chapter 1 Section A Question 3a: What are the targeted career pathway clusters in the region?

A career cluster is a group of occupations with similar features. Jobs in the same cluster require similar knowledge or skill sets. If someone enjoys a job in a particular cluster, they are more likely to enjoy related occupations in the group. The targeted career pathway clusters in EDR 1 are;

Health Science – Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, Nursing Assistants, Surgical Technologists, Respiratory Therapists, Occupational Therapy Assistants, Medical Assistants, Dental Hygienists, and Phlebotomists.

Manufacturing – First Line Supervisors, Production Workers, Machinists, Welders, Mechanical Engineers, Assemblers, Machine Feeders and Off bearers

Agriculture- Food Science Technicians, Agricultural Equipment Operators, Inspectors, Agricultural Teachers, Water/Waste Water Technicians

Transportation – Truck Drivers, Logistics Operations Specialists, Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers, Supply Chain Analysts

The original plan defines career pathway clusters as targeted industries. Table 3 provides a reference for creating a similar list.

Alternatively, targeted occupations can be aligned with the [National Career Clusters Framework](#). This framework consists of 14 clusters and 72 sub-clusters, which serve as the primary organizing structure for CTE programs. To match occupations to career clusters the [O*NET OnLine browser](#) can be used. Table 8 summarizes the clusters and sub-clusters of the National Career Clusters Framework corresponding to the targeted occupations listed in Table 3.

Since targeted industries remain largely unchanged, the corresponding career pathway clusters also remain mostly consistent. However, occupations within these clusters may need to be adjusted depending on the changes in the section A.1.a.

When matching targeted occupations to the National Career Clusters Framework, the targeted career clusters and sub-clusters include:

- **Advanced Manufacturing:** Production & Automation
- **Agriculture:** Animal Systems, Water Systems, and Plant Systems
- **Healthcare and Human Services:** Personal Care Services and Physical Health
- **Supply Chain and Transportation:** Ground & Rail Transportation, Maintenance & Repair, and Purchasing & Warehousing



Table 8: Career Clusters and Sub-Clusters for Targeted Occupations
Source: National Career Clusters Framework and O*NET OnLine

Cluster	Sub-Cluster	Occupation
Advanced Manufacturing	Production & Automation	Separating, Filtering, Clarifying, Precipitating, and Still Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders
Advanced Manufacturing	Production & Automation	Sewing Machine Operators
Advanced Manufacturing	Production & Automation	Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators
Agriculture	Agribusiness; Animal Systems; Food Science & Processing; Plant Systems; Water Systems	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers
Agriculture	Animal Systems; Water Systems	Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals
Agriculture	Plant Systems	Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse
Agriculture	Plant Systems	Logging Equipment Operators
Agriculture	Water Systems	Fishing and Hunting Workers
Healthcare and Human Services	Personal Care Services	Home Health and Personal Care Aides
Healthcare and Human Services	Physical Health	Dental Assistants
Healthcare and Human Services	Physical Health	Nursing Assistants
Healthcare and Human Services	Physical Health	Registered Nurses
Supply Chain and Transportation	Ground & Rail Transportation	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
Supply Chain and Transportation	Ground & Rail Transportation	Light Truck Drivers
Supply Chain and Transportation	Maintenance & Repair	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists
Supply Chain and Transportation	Purchasing & Warehousing	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand
Supply Chain and Transportation	Purchasing & Warehousing	Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders

Chapter 1 Section A Question 3b: What are the skills that are in demand in the region?

Essential skills continue to be identified by employers as a key barrier to individuals entering employment. Not only do employers want individuals with specific occupational skills, but they also want individuals with the foundational workplace skills as well. Through conversations and business visits with employers, feedback showed that employers considered the following qualifications as essential to being hired:

- Reliability
- Communication Skills
- Personal Responsibility
- Computer and Technological Skills
- Time Management
- Adaptability
- Problem Solving and Critical Thinking

Chapter 1 Section A Question 3c: How well do the existing skills of job seekers match the demands of local business?

In our Region, as in the rest of the State, the gap in skills between what a potential employee possesses and what an employer needs are a complex issue. We hear frequently that there are not enough of the right graduates for in-demand jobs. Many of the job seekers in our region have lost their jobs from occupations that are declining. To meet the needs of employers for skilled workers in healthcare, professional and business services, and manufacturing, these individuals need training. This is the case for low-income adults and youth as well.

The table below shows the educational attainment of the population in the Central Region. However, none of these percentages have changed much since the last regional plan, which leads us to presume educational attainment in the region is stagnant. Due to this trend, the regions' partners plan to increase the number of individuals who possess the skills required by employers through sector and career pathway initiatives specifically focusing on the targeted industries and through apprenticeships.

- 5 % lower than state average for bachelor's degree.
- EDR 1 has 36.73% of the population with a high school diploma or equivalent, which is higher than the state average.
- 20.46% of the population with some college, again higher than the state average.
- 9% of the population with an Associate's Degree

Relative to the original plan changes in data are very minor.

Figure 8: Share of Population Age 25+ by Education Level
U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey
2026 Central Regional Plan Data Packet, Page 6

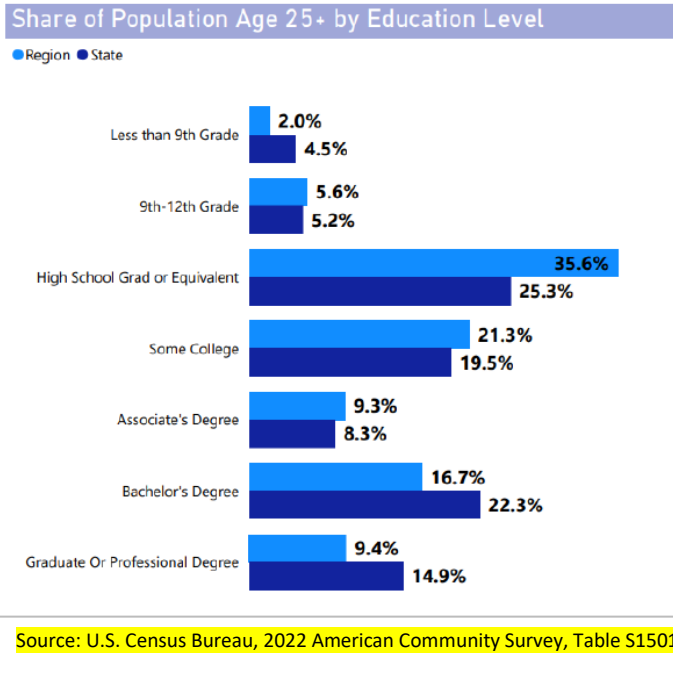


Figure 4: Selected In-Demand Occupations Requiring a Certificate or License
Source: IDES, 2022-2032 Occupation Employment Projections; OEWS 2024; Learn More, Earn More, 2024
2026 Central Regional Plan Data Packet, Page 37

✓ Living wage for one adult - \$23.56 ✓ Living wage for a single parent - \$40.41

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections, 2022-2032, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2024, Learn More, Earn More, 2024. Living Wage thresholds from the Living Wage Institute at MIT, <https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/17>, accessed October 2025.

Requiring a Certificate or License

Occupation	Projected Annual Openings	Entry Wage	Experienced Wage	Skills
Nursing Assistants	382	\$17.41	\$22.13	Service Orientation, Active Listening, Social Perceptiveness
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	326	\$19.67	\$32.03 ✓	Operation Monitoring, Time Management
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	253			Instructing, Active Learning, Active Listening
Childcare Workers	222	\$14.47	\$17.37	Monitoring, Service Orientation, Speaking
Medical Assistants	174	\$18.39	\$22.14	Speaking, Active Listening, Reading Comprehension
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	121	\$16.78	\$29.97 ✓	Equipment Maintenance, Repairing, Troubleshooting
Exercise Trainers and Group Fitness Instructors	115	\$14.58	\$26.51 ✓	Instructing, Service Orientation, Social Perceptiveness

Figure 5: Selected In-Demand Occupations Requiring an Associate's Degree
Source: IDES, 2022-2032 Occupation Employment Projections; OEWS 2024; Learn More, Earn More, 2024
2026 Central Regional Plan Data Packet, Page 37

✓ Living wage for one adult - \$23.56 ✓ Living wage for a single parent - \$40.41

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections, 2022-2032, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2024, Learn More, Earn More, 2024. Living Wage thresholds from the Living Wage Institute at MIT, <https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/17>, accessed October 2025.

Requiring an Associate's Degree

Occupation	Projected Annual Openings	Entry Wage	Experienced Wage	Skills
Registered Nurses	354	\$33.04 ✓	\$46.53 ✓	Active Listening, Social Perceptiveness, Service Orientation
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	79	\$14.62	\$21.46	Speaking, Learning Strategies, Instructing
Computer User Support Specialists	46	\$20.12	\$33.22 ✓	Active Listening, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	32	\$21	\$34.26 ✓	Reading Comprehension, Active Listening, Speaking
Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	29	\$19.55	\$35.48 ✓	Active Listening, Critical Thinking, Reading Comprehension
Computer Network Support Specialists	21	\$21.32	\$37.14 ✓	Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Decision Making
Physical Therapist Assistants	21	\$26.09 ✓	\$34.09 ✓	Active Listening, Monitoring, Social Perceptiveness

Figure 6: Selected In-Demand Occupations Requiring a Bachelor's Degree
Source: IDES, 2022-2032 Occupation Employment Projections; OEWS 2024; Learn More, Earn More, 2024
2026 Central Regional Plan Data Packet, Page 38

✓ Living wage for one adult - \$23.56 ✓ Living wage for a single parent - \$40.41

Requiring a Bachelor's Degree

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections, 2022-2032, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2024, Learn More, Earn More, 2024. Living Wage thresholds from the Living Wage Institute at MIT, <https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/17>, accessed October 2025.

Occupation	Projected Annual Openings	Entry Wage	Experienced Wage	Skills
General and Operations Managers	513	\$25.35 ✓	\$73.97 ✓	Active Listening, Coordination, Monitoring
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	239	\$28.06 ✓	\$54.05 ✓	Active Listening, Critical Thinking, Reading Comprehension
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	157			Instructing, Speaking, Learning Strategies
Accountants and Auditors	134	\$26.57 ✓	\$49.84 ✓	Active Listening, Mathematics, Reading Comprehension
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	98	\$19.89	\$38.16 ✓	Reading Comprehension, Listening, Problem Solving
Insurance Sales Agents	91	\$17.34	\$41.50 ✓	Active Listening, Reading Comprehension, Speaking
Management Analysts	86	\$30.01 ✓	\$61.54 ✓	Active Listening, Critical Thinking, Reading Comprehension

A. Provide an Analysis of the:

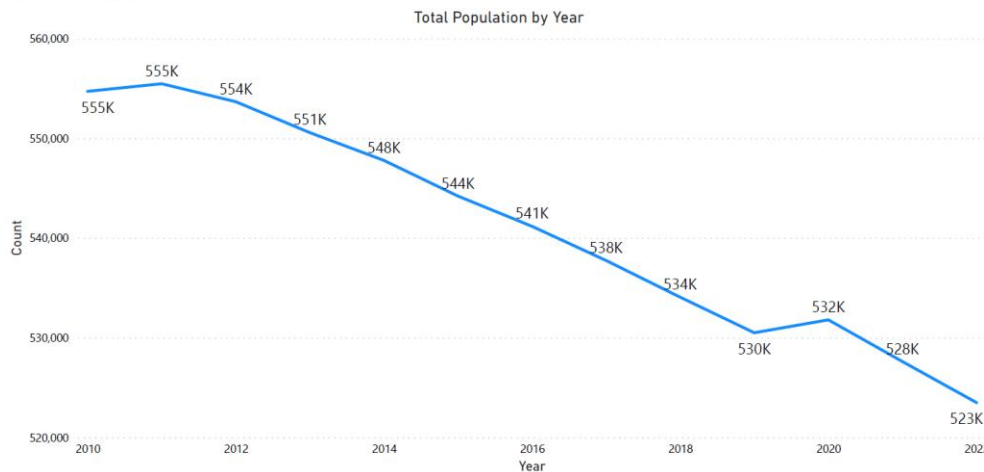
- Regional workforce considering current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iv) and § 679.560(a)(3)).

Chapter 1 Section A Question 4a: How is the region changing in terms of demographics, labor supply and occupational demand?

Total Population Over Time

Illinois has a population of 12,582,032 and is the 6th largest state in the nation. Below are the estimated total population and share of total population over time, along with the 2022 population for each county in the region.

Care must be taken when comparing population for 2019 and 2020, as the 2019 estimate was based on migration and aging adjustments from the 2010 census, and 2020 was a full count of the population. The Census Bureau did not revise previous population estimates to reconcile with the 2020 full counts.



Region: Central

County	2022 Population
Cass	12,657
Christian	33,436
Greene	11,651
Logan	27,591
Macon	101,483
Macoupin	44,245
Menard	12,121
Montgomery	28,020
Morgan	32,209
Sangamon	194,534
Scott	4,790
Shelby	20,761
Total	523,498

4.3%

Share of State in 2010

4.2%

Share of State in 2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program, 2010-2019 & 2020-2022.

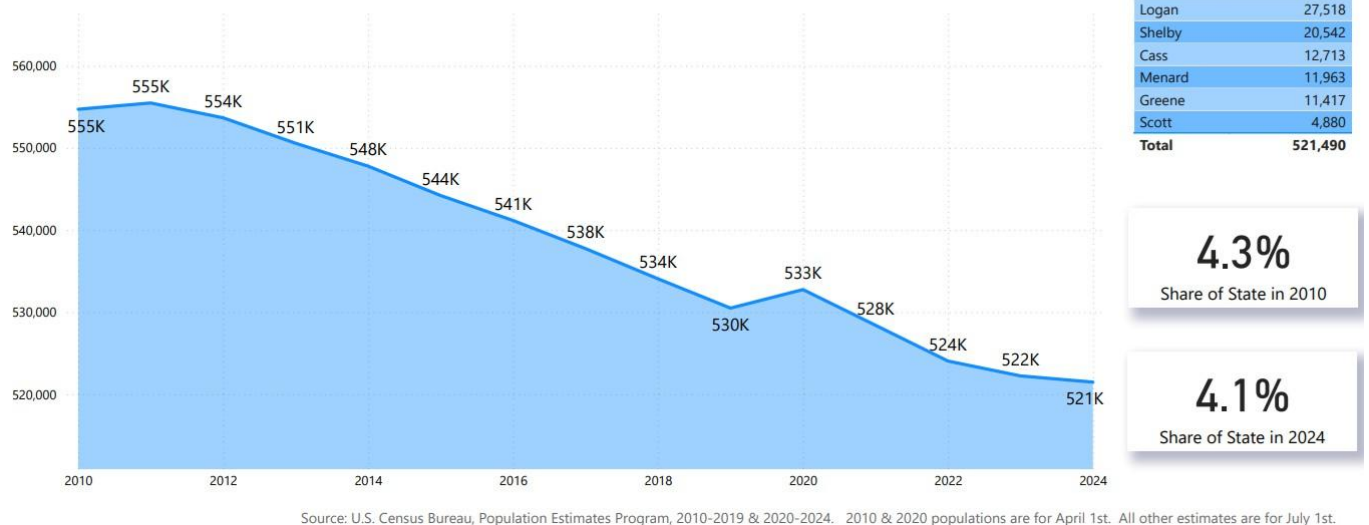
The population in EDR 1 continues to decrease, though the decline has slowed down somewhat. In 2020 there were 532,000 people living in the region. In 2022, the population had dropped by 11,000 people to 523,000. Additionally, the median age in Illinois has been steadily increasing. The data shows this is the trend for EDR

1 as well. The largest population numbers are from individuals ages 60-64. There are 37,164 individuals between those ages in EDR 1, which shows 7.1% of the population may be retiring within the next 5 years.

This demographic shift will continue into the future and will create continued downward pressure on labor supply for the entire region. The unemployment rate for the region is lower than that of the State. The aging population is a key contributor to the expected strong demand for healthcare and manufacturing workers.

Illinois has a population of 12,710,158 and is the 6th largest state in the nation. Below are the estimated total population and share of total population over time, along with the 2024 population for each county in the region.

Care must be taken when comparing population for 2019 and 2020, as the 2019 estimate was based on migration and aging adjustments from the 2010 census, and 2020 was a full count of the population. The Census Bureau did not revise previous population estimates to reconcile with the 2020 full counts. Statewide, the Census Bureau estimated population decreases for 2020-2022, which were somewhat reversed for 2023-2024.



Chapter 1 Section A Question 4b: What special populations exist in the region, what is their magnitude, and what are the policy and service implications to meet the needs of these individuals?

Special populations that exist in the region include but are not limited to:

- Veterans
- Persons of Color
- Individuals with Disabilities
- Women
- Individuals Living in Poverty
- Returning Citizens
- Individuals Lacking a High School Diploma

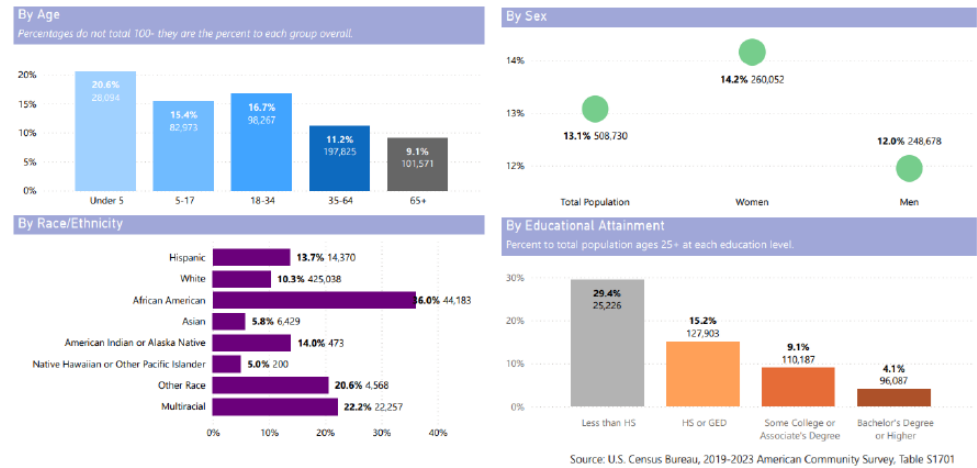
The region is committed to expanding access for targeted and historically marginalized populations, including those living in poverty, persons of color, individuals with disabilities, out-of-school youth, and veterans. Regionally, the partners will work to establish partnerships and collaborate with community organizations in

order to serve job seeker customers to access the services that they need in order to be able to acquire the job skills that will lead to employment.

The Tables listed below provide some information on the magnitude of the Special Populations to be served.

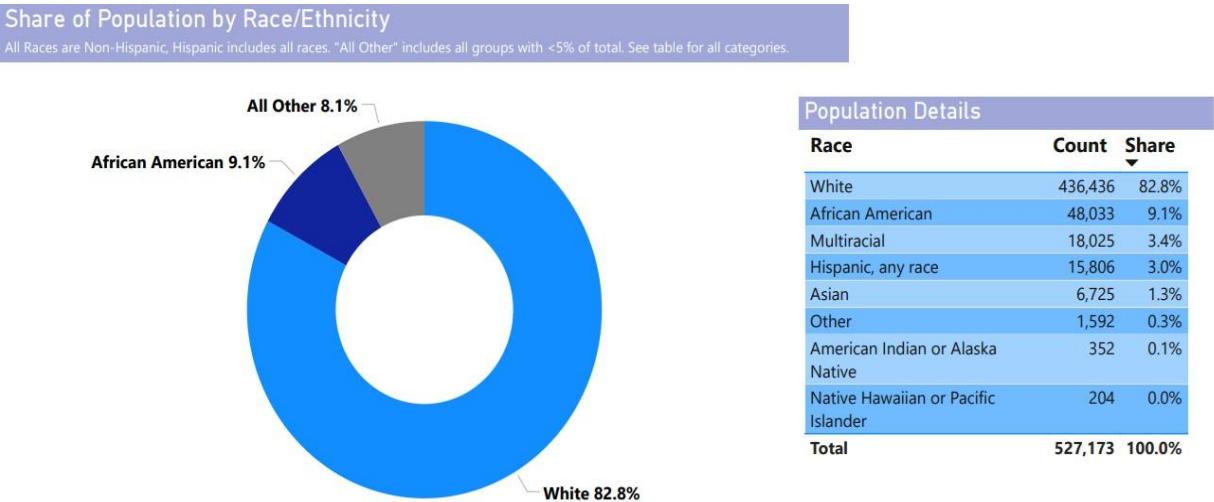
Figure 25: Poverty Status by Age, Race, Sex, and Education
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey
2026 Central Regional Plan Data Packet, Page 13

Roughly 1.5 million Illinois residents live below poverty. Children under the age of 5 (17%), females (13%), African Americans (25%), and individuals lacking a high school diploma or equivalent (21%) are more likely to live below poverty. Below are the counts and percentages of residents in the region experiencing poverty by several characteristics. Percentages are to their total populations in the region- e.g., the percentage of all males, the percentage of all females, etc. For this reason, percentages do not total 100.



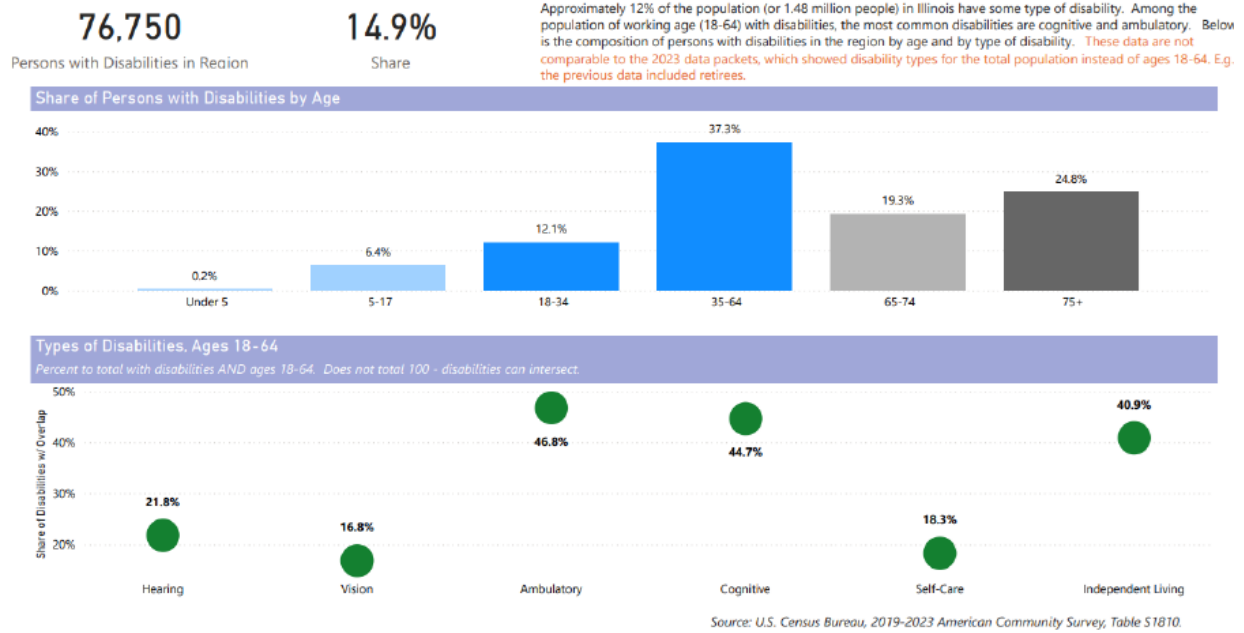
Central EDR is less diverse that the state overall, but 17.2% of it's total population is represented by persons of color (vs 41\$ statewide):

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey
2026 Central Regional Plan Data Packet



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey, Table B03002.

Figure 23: Population with Disabilities
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey
2026 Central Regional Plan Data Packet, Page 9



Median Income by Race within Counties, Central Region

Statewide, the median income for African American households is \$49,100, Asian households is \$111,938, Hispanic households is \$74,795, and White households is \$89,563. Below are the American Community Survey responses for household income by race in each county of the region.

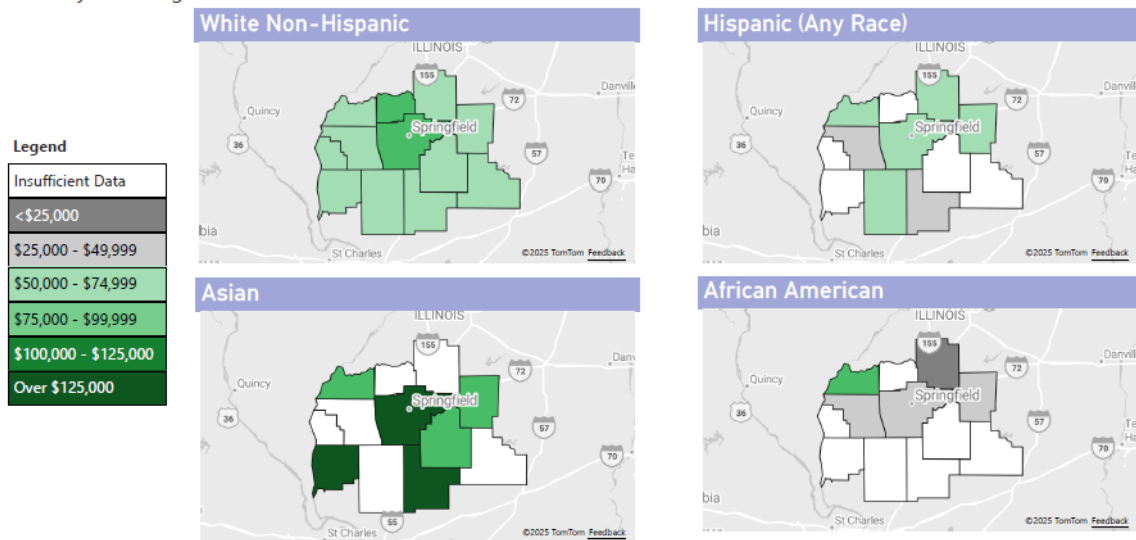
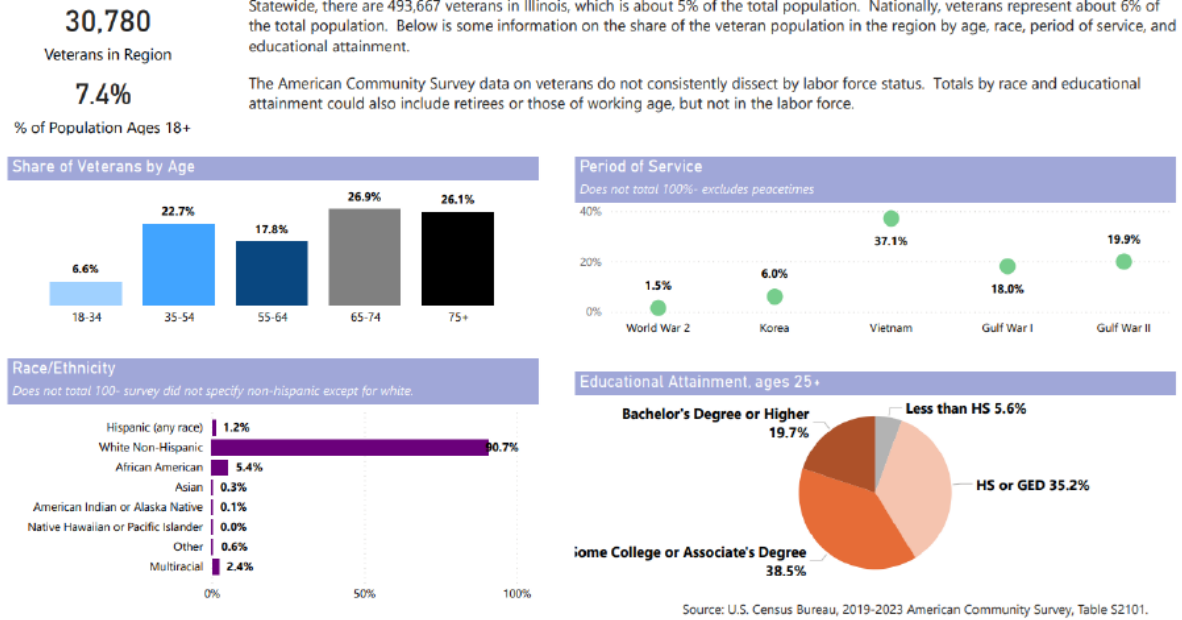


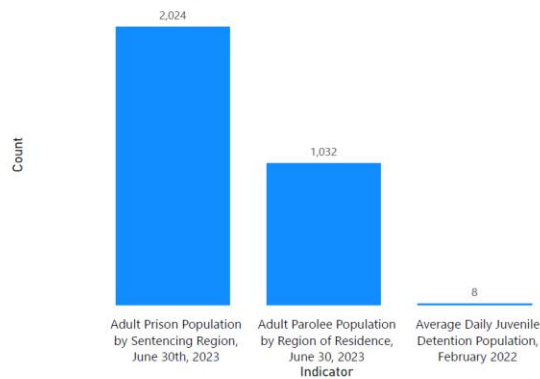
Figure 24: Veteran population
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey
2026 Central Regional Plan Data Packet, Page 9



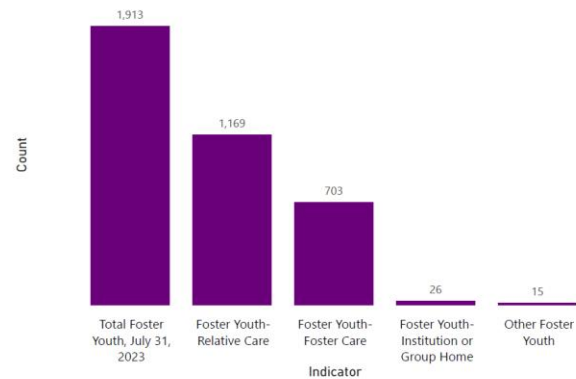
Target Population Characteristics

Below are some counts of various target populations in the EDR. Please note that timing of the counts varies by indicator, due to the data being reported at different times by several agencies. All data were most recent available at time of writing in August 2023.

Justice-Involved Populations



Foster Care Indicators



Data Sources

Justice-Involved Populations

Prison Population- Illinois Department of Corrections, Prison Population Data Set, 6/30/2023
Parolee Population- Illinois Department of Corrections, Parole Population Data Set, 6/30/2023
Juvenile Population- Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission, JMIS Monthly Data Report, February 2022

Foster Care Indicators

Illinois Department of Children & Family Services- Youth in Care by County, July 31, 2023.

Target Populations

Source: Illinois Department of Corrections, Illinois Department of Human Services, Illinois Department of Children & Family Services, U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey

Among the most prominent special populations in the Central EDR are residents with disabilities and veterans.

Below are some counts of various target populations in the EDR. Please note that timing of the counts varies by indicator, due to the data being reported at different times by several agencies. All data were most recent available at time of writing in August 2025.

Justice-Involvement Indicators

Source: Illinois Department of Corrections, Prison & Parolee Population Datasets, Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission, JMIS Monthly Data Reports.

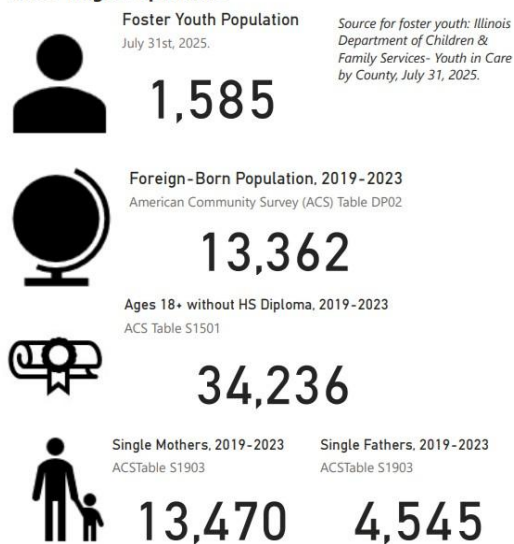


Low-Income Indicators

Source: Illinois Department of Human Services, June & July, 2025.



Other Target Populations



Additionally, the share of residents living below the poverty line remains consistently high, particularly among vulnerable groups such as women, children, and persons of color.

While the Central EDR is less ethnically diverse than Illinois overall, it is home to approximately 91,000 persons of color, 12,400 foreign-born residents, and 19,700 individuals who do not speak English at home. The relatively high poverty rate among persons of color suggests the presence of systemic barriers to economic opportunity.

Although the share of the population without a high school diploma is relatively low, it still represents about 34,200 residents aged 18 and older. Moreover, the proportion of these residents living below the poverty line in the Central EDR is higher compared to Illinois overall.

Reducing poverty in the Central EDR requires policies that expand access to high-quality jobs and address barriers faced by marginalized populations. Other priorities include:

- Achieving a high school diploma and pursuing further education are critical steps toward securing quality employment. Programs that support adult education, GED completion, and postsecondary training should be prioritized for residents lacking such credentials.
- Residents with disabilities and veterans represent significant groups within the region. Tailored workforce development initiatives, accessibility improvements, and employer incentives can help integrate these populations into stable, well-paying jobs.

- While the population with limited English proficiency is relatively small, providing language training and supportive services is essential to ensure these residents can fully participate in the labor force and access career pathways.

B. Describe how the Local Workforce Boards and WIOA partners support the development and implementation of sector partnerships for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iii)); Plans must answer the following questions:

Chapter 1 Section B Question 1: How will the workforce partners use the TPM framework to convene or support the convening of regional employers, foundations, educational institutions and other stakeholders to create or maintain sector partnerships?

The Central Region will continue to share data regionally and will look for the commonalities between the three LWIA's. Annually the Central Region plans to convene a "sector-led" meeting, focusing on the three main industries, Healthcare/Social Services, Manufacturing, and Transportation to discuss issues and opportunities within the region.

Included in the meetings will be businesses from the specific sector, Economic Development, Chambers of Commerce, and all core partners within WIOA. Economic development will facilitate the meetings.

The talent pipeline framework will continue to be referenced and encouraged when addressing pressing workforce challenges in EDR 1. These strategies and tools will be shared with businesses and workforce development partners when creating sector partnerships.

Chapter 1 Section B Question 2: Identify the established and active sector partnerships in the region (as defined above). If any regional sector partnerships, including TPM employer collaboratives exist, Identify: a. The sector, b. The neutral convening organization, c. The geographic area covered by the partnership, d. If they are authentically business led, e. The LWIBSs role in the partnership, if any. f. and what their role is in WIOA planning.

It is the Region's intent to build upon the previous sector partnerships discussed in the last plan. These provide the region with a good foundation to expand upon. The goal for the region is to have one top tier industries meet annually to address all issues and concerns for the region. These events will encompass businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and Economic Development organizations, and will discuss all issues that the companies are experiencing, including workforce concerns. At the end of the 2024-2028 regional plan we plan to have met with all four top tier industries and will have outcomes that show how we addressed their workforce matters.

The Region's initial focus is to work collaboratively with businesses, Chambers of Commerce and other organizations to highlight the healthcare, transportation, agriculture, and manufacturing industries. Current examples of regional sector partnerships include;

FAME – Prairie Land Chapter, an employer-led sector partnership representing the manufacturing industry. The chapter currently consists of five manufacturing employers and serves as a collaborative forum to address workforce needs within the manufacturing sector. Its primary focus is the implementation and continuous improvement of a work-based learning and training model known as the Advanced Manufacturing Technician (AMT) program, designed to develop a pipeline of skilled, multi-skilled maintenance technicians. The LWIB's role in this partnership is that one of the Board members who also represents ADM in Decatur is also a member of FAME. The role is to support development and broadening the talent pipeline.

A secondary purpose of the Illinois FAME – Prairie Land Chapter is to support ongoing employer collaboration and information sharing related to workforce and talent development needs. This includes coordination of training strategies, engagement with education and workforce system partners, alignment with supporting organizations, and efforts to strengthen and promote career pathways and the image of manufacturing within the regional labor market.

Montgomery & Macoupin Manufacturing Council- The MMMC is a group of nearly a dozen manufacturers in the Litchfield area that came together to form a collaborative called the Montgomery & Macoupin Manufacturing Council. The intent of this manufacturing focused partnership is to explore industry challenges, human resource issues and local economic factors while looking at collective solutions. This includes the need for an available and skilled workforce, pooling resources, possible partnerships and strategic alliances. Since many of the active businesses within the council have either been a board member of LWIA 21 or participated in local planning and economic development efforts, there is a natural partnership with the WIOA partners when exploring much needed solutions such as recruitment, training and retention.

As a truly business led initiative, the group also has great potential for the future implementation of the Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) process, which would be a first for this area. Although the collaborating companies have not met for a period of time due to a variety of company and personnel changes, LWIA 21 plans to continue supporting and partnering with the group moving forward as they look to re-engage in 2026.

Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC): Partners with LWIA 20 and local manufacturers to provide tools, innovative support, and customized workforce solutions to fostering sector growth. This group also more widely works regionally even beyond the Central Region to provide and support business led initiatives in Illinois. The LWIB provides funding for customized incumbent worker trainings and apprenticeships within the manufacturing sector. Some of the manufacturers to-date include; Richardson's Manufacturing, Bunn-O-Matic, Solomon Colors, Ace Sign Company, Heritage Packaging, Henry Technologies, Mel-O-Cream, and Drake-Scruggs. IMEC is also serving as the sector specialist in a new, unique, four local workforce area (15, 17, 19, 20) pilot sector project to address the need for a skilled workforce that has training and barrier removal services to address skills gaps, and connect more people to rewarding careers in manufacturing.

Chapter 1 Section B Question 3: What public-private partnerships exist in the region that could support sector partnerships , and their role in WIOA planning?

Sector-based partnerships in the region include:

IMEC – Manufacturing: IMEC was established in 1996 to improve the productivity and competitiveness of Illinois' small and mid-sized manufacturing firms.

Litchfield Manufacturing Group - A small group of manufacturers in Litchfield have begun the process of forming a collaborative which will explore industry challenges, local economic factors, and possible solutions. This includes the need for an available and skilled workforce, pooling resources, possible partnerships, and strategic alliances. As an employer led initiative, the collaborative has great potential for the implementation of the Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) process which would be an introduction to the Montgomery County area. LWIA 21 will partner with this group as they move the collaborative forward.

Midwest Inland Port – Manufacturing/Logistics and Transportation: “Midwest Inland Port is a multi-modal hub located in Decatur, Illinois that delivers both domestic and international flexibility for companies through a well-positioned transportation corridor, connecting the Midwest to the East, West and Gulf Coasts of North America”.

Midwest Trucking Association – Logistics and Transportation: Mid-West Truckers Association represents and services over 3,000 members in 15 states. Members are comprised of trucking companies and companies that operate trucks as part of their business.

The Decatur Building Trades Council – Is a partnership that support sector strategies. This organization has supported the Trade pre-apprenticeship grants as well as the work experiences.

IDES- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers IDES staff provides staff-assisted services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers including job development, career guidance, referrals to training and supportive services. Wagner-Peyser staff will assist with the intake process by assessing the client’s needs, assisting with UI claims, and registering with Illinois Job Link in order for the claimant to immediately begin searching for work. Staff will also provide Labor Market Information to educate clients on the current employment outlook and determine if further training will be necessary to enhance employment opportunities. Clients may be directed to work-readiness workshops or referred to partner agencies and/or supportive services, depending on the needs of the client.

Springfield & Central IL Trades & Labor Council represents the working women and men in 10 Central Illinois counties.

Springfield Sangamon County Growth Alliance was created as the Land of Lincoln Economic Development Corporation (LLEDC) in 2018 as a public-private sector partnership dedicated to advancing economic development efforts in Springfield and Sangamon County, in the State of Illinois. Led by a volunteer-based, diverse, and industry-driven board of directors, their mission is to pursue economic prosperity and growth for Sangamon County and the City of Springfield.

South Central Illinois Regional Training Center (SCI) – In partnership with the Litchfield School District, nine area high schools, two community colleges and a variety of other organizations & businesses, SCI provides training across many different sectors . These include construction trades, healthcare, welding, automotive, IT,

agriculture, culinary and childcare. The center is located next to Lincoln Land Community College in Litchfield, Illinois.

Chapter 1 Section B Question 4: What neutral conveners with the capacity to help establish sector partnerships exist in the region and what is their role in WIOA planning?

Neutral conveners in the Central Region that have the capacity to help establish sector partnerships include:

- Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center – IMEC provides assistance to Illinois' small and mid-sized manufacturers in identifying and solving performance gaps and building a culture that supports sustained improvements. They coordinate and provide incumbent worker training.
- Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance - is a public-private sector partnership dedicated to advancing economic development efforts in Springfield and Sangamon County. Led by a volunteer-based, diverse, and industry-driven board of directors, the mission is to pursue economic prosperity and growth for Sangamon County and the City of Springfield. SSGA serves on the LWIB for LWIA 20.
- The Economic Development Corporation of Decatur & Macon County – The EDC's primary role is to provide support and to be a point of contact for prospective area employers that are non-retail in nature as well as advocate for the establishment of their presence in the community. Additionally, they administer Illinois Enterprise Zone benefits as they apply.
- The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce- The chamber advocates on behalf of members for business-friendly legislation and offers programs, services, and networking opportunities to help make local business thrive and grow. The GSCC currently collaborates with LWIA 20 on job fairs.
- Jacksonville Regional Economic Development Corporation - The JREDC is focused on economic development projects that help achieve the mission of retaining and creating job opportunities in Morgan & Scott Counties. This mission is accomplished through the retention and expansion of local businesses, along with the recruitment of new businesses and investment in our communities. By focusing on high growth sectors such as manufacturing and healthcare, JREDC participates in WIOA initiatives and planning centered on economic and workforce development.
- Carlinville Chamber of Commerce – The chamber promotes economic development, workforce development and community based initiatives throughout the greater Carlinville & Macoupin County area on behalf of its business-led membership. Through local grant writing efforts, community meetings, surveys, and other sector focused efforts, the chamber is a strong advocate of the local job center and its local and regional planning initiatives.
- Decatur Regional Chamber of Commerce - The chamber advocates on behalf of members for business-friendly legislation and offers programs, services, and networking opportunities to help make local business thrive and grow.
- Local Workforce Boards in our Region – these business led boards are ideally situated to convene employers for development of Sector Initiatives. Members come from the industries that are being targeted in the Region.
- Sector associations could be neutral conveners including – Illinois Manufacturing Association, Illinois Medical Association, Illinois Hospital Association, Midwest Truckers, etc.

Chapter 1 Section C: If any employer collaboratives are engaged in the U.S. Chamber's Talent Pipeline Management initiative, describe the following:

Currently there are no U.S Chamber Talent Pipeline Management initiatives in EDR1.

Each LWIA plans to work towards TPM initiative goals.

LWIA 19 intends to train a staff member in TPM.

LWIA 20 intends to train a staff member in TPM.

LWIA 21 has a staff member trained in TPM.

Chapter 1 Section C Question a: What is the focus of the collaborative?

The focus of these collaboratives are to assist with providing a talent pipeline, RAI awareness, employment retention, and to keep businesses and workers competitive.

Chapter 1 Section C Question b: How is the workforce system supporting the needs of these employers?

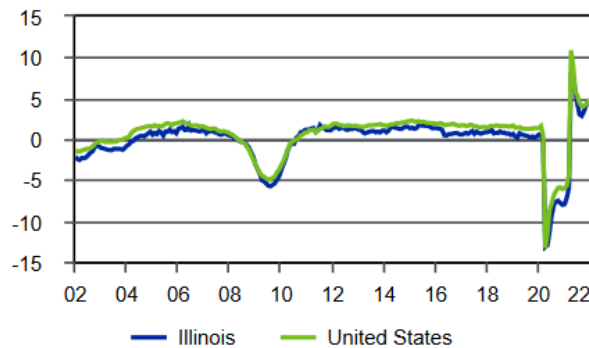
The workforce system in EDR 1 is supporting the employers' needs by providing Career Services and Business Grants for training. Each LWIA also hosts, sponsors, and assists local businesses in their respective workforce areas with various in-person and virtual hiring events. Regional, sector events are also sponsored on an annual basis.

Chapter 1 Section D: Describe any broad economic development opportunities in the region within the context of the workforce, education and economic development plans.

In line with the rest of the State, in EDR 1 most industries are starting to strengthen since the pandemic. Unemployment rates are back down. The Decatur economy is recovering at a measured pace. It will continue to proceed at a slow, but steady pace. The key manufacturing industry is moving in the right direction, however, thanks to its focus on ascendant food processing. Supply-chain issues are expected to continue to ease. In Springfield the State government will have some breathing room for the next few years. Healthcare will provide the best avenue for growth because of the continued graying population. Agricultural price increases are expected to soften and the outlook for the industry is optimistic. Institutions of higher education are generally well positioned, and expected to receive funding increases. We may also see an increase of tech-related hiring across all targeted industries.

Employment Growth

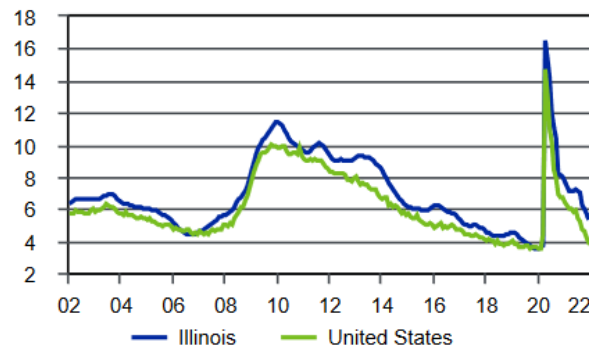
% change yr ago



Sources: BLS, Moody's Analytics

Unemployment Rate

%



Sources: BLS, Moody's Analytics

Chapter 1 Section E: Describe any broad economic challenges in the region workforce, education and economic development plans.

Similar to above reference, EDR 1 does face some broad economic challenges such as inflation and wage pressures. Personal income has been slower to rise, and that trend is expected to continue. Professional and business services are going to be critical to the economy's success, but most of that growth in well-paying industries will likely take place in Northern Illinois.

The economy in Springfield has been growing at a mediocre pace, and over the next few years employment is expected to increase, but at a slower rate than desired. Persistent out-migration may also continue to be a challenge. If job seekers cannot earn enough to live here and raise their families they will relocate to other areas and states where they can. The shift to e-commerce will continue to hinder small businesses. The housing market and widening of inequitable income gaps may also pose challenges. We will also need to work hard to hold on to the recent surge in manufacturing due to competition.

Academia also faces a looming demand problem not only due to rising costs, but also due to changing demographic patterns. Longer-term structural issues in combination with pandemic-related stress will leave some institutions at risk of failure.

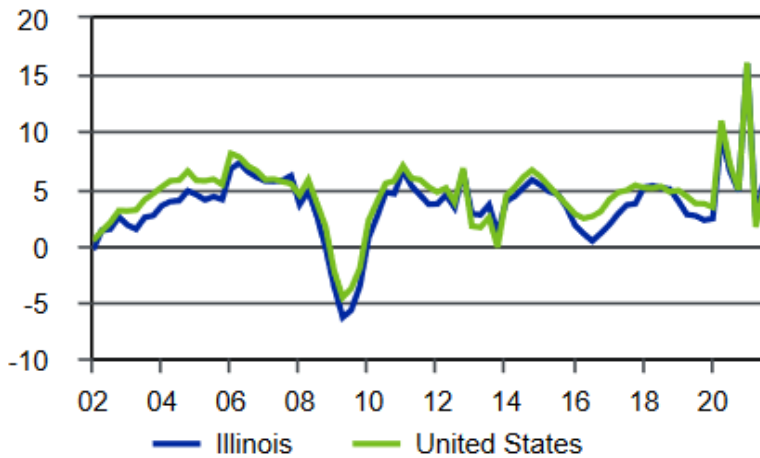
Chapter 1 Section E: Describe how responsiveness, inclusivity and accessibility are incorporated into collecting and analyzing labor market information for this plan.

Responsiveness, inclusivity, and accessibility are incorporated into collecting and analyzing Labor Market Information (LMI) by ensuring data systems and processes are adaptable, representative of diverse populations, and easily usable by all individuals.

EDR 1 has made sure that the analysis of past and present data is captured across a variety of populations and intends to respond to data and LMI changes as needed. Continuous efforts will be made to ensure and improve upon continued accessibility of LMI and various access tools.

Personal Income

% change



Sources: BEA, Moody's Analytics

MOODY'S ANALYTICS / Copyright© 2022

Chapter 1 Section F: Describe how a *responsiveness, inclusivity and accessibility* is incorporated into the local planning requirements for collecting and analyzing labor market information.

EDR 1 shares the vision of the Governor's Workforce Equity Commission's Task Force and utilizes takeaways and recommendations from its final report. EDR 1 is committed to applying an responsiveness, inclusivity and accessibility to our workforce development strategies to help ensure that our most vulnerable populations gain skills and access to good jobs. Throughout the life of this plan, EDR 1 will continue to refine its strategies and activities to ensure it is working towards the vision becoming a reality.

EDR 1 has been participating in trainings for a few years now in order to increase awareness, and work on inclusivity and accessibility. During the planning process EDR 1 Utilized data and the service integration self-assessment tool to address and improve workforce equity challenges.

We will continue to work on strategies and targeted approaches to serve populations that have otherwise been underserved by traditional methods. EDR1 strives to ensure that equitable principles and practices are in place to continue to build definitive action towards inclusion and equitable growth. We will continue to;

- Acknowledge that there are historically marginalized populations
- Embrace responsiveness, inclusivity and accessibility
- Increase Awareness
- Simplify language and processes
- Apply fairness to unbalanced conditions in order to create and sustain change
- Broaden scopes of outreach to target populations.
- Educate staff on RIA.

Chapter 2 – Strategies for Service Integration – Regional Component

This regional component of the plan must describe the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers. Regions are required to provide information and analysis of the steps that will be taken to address the challenges and opportunities associated with the regional service integration strategies.

A. Provide an analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the region. This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs to employers (§ 679.560(a)(4)). The plan must address the following areas:

Chapter 2 Section A Question 1: Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities in the region.

As part of the 2023 and 2024 regional planning meetings, the Partners identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) pertaining to workforce development in the region. The results of this analysis are shown in the Table below.

SWOT Analysis for Central Region – Workforce Development		
Internal Origin	Strengths: • Educational services • Training In Targeted Industries • Community Partners • Cost of Living • COVID Recovery • Large number of small businesses • Diverse economic make-up & Industries • Large Number of Job Openings • Development of technology to deliver services	Weaknesses: • Lack of workers • Duplication of Services • Employability & Skills shortage • Working in Silos • Communicating services • Closing of offices/reduced staff due to budgets • Lack of awareness of services to individuals • Lost Service Integration as a result of COVID • Capacity to train • Lack of customer technology skills
	Opportunities: • Large number of job openings/unfilled positions • New/emerging education/career pathways • Emerging Transportation Systems • Regional collaboration • Service Integration Plans Revived • Incorporation of Essential Skills into each program. • Increase in Career and Technical Education • Utilization of equity lens	Threats: • Anxiety and Confidence • Lingering effects of pandemic • Loss of large businesses • Lack of Highly Skilled Workers • Economic downturn • Lack of CTE Teachers and facilities • Funding – lack of from both state and other sources • Illinoisans migrating to other states • Labor participation rate • Decreasing Workforce

Strengths: The primary strengths of the region are the large number of job openings and the cost of living. There are unfilled openings across all industry sectors. There is still an enormous need for healthcare workers, teachers and transportation and logistics workers. For those seeking employment in these areas there is an abundance of opportunity.

In addition to the overall strengths identified by the partners, there are a number of specific strengths of our workforce development system in the region. These can be categorized into two groups: a wide array of workforce development and educational services, and strong workforce development processes and business practices.

Workforce development and educational services:

- Development of Individual Employment Plan
- Job Search Assistance
- Job Placement Service
- Career Exploration
- Assessment
- Basic Skills instruction
- ESL
- HSE – Adult Secondary Education
- Bridge Programs
- Occupational Training
- Work Based Learning – Work Experience / On-The-Job Training/Apprenticeships
- Supportive Services – Childcare / Transportation / Tools / Supplies
- Labor Market Information
- On-Line Opportunities - Illinois workNet, Illinois Job Link, Career Information System
- Unemployment Benefits
- Cash Assistance / SNAP

Workforce development processes and business practices:

- Recruitment, Assessment, Selection Process
- Proven experience with targeted trainings
- Strong ties to the community agencies
- Established relationships/partnerships with employers
- Established relationships with SHRM and EDC organizations
- Aligning efforts to demand industries, occupations and skills
- Previous success with regional collaborations
- Consistently meet/exceed performance goals (entered employment, retention, wages, measurable skills gains, and credential attainment)
- Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) is business driven and based on six core strategies, and provides a sector designed approach to bridging the gap between businesses and potential employees.

Weaknesses: The lack of workers in the region was also seen as a weakness. Labor force participation has not returned to the same pre-pandemic levels. During their meeting the partners identified several contributors to the lack of job seekers. These included:

- The “Great Resignation” which started in 2021. This included those leaving their jobs because of pandemic fatigue and those leaving because of vaccine mandates.
- Large numbers of retirements – The Federal Reserve noted that 2.5 million Americans chose to retire during the pandemic.
- Government assistance was also cited as a reason for a lack of workers.
- Turnover was an issue as well, with those currently working moving from job to job.
- Other related labor market shifts.

Additionally, the regional partners identified other weaknesses or opportunities for improvement, including duplication of services, the continued tendency of some to work in respective silos, the length of time it takes to train workers in our existing institutions, and challenges in recruiting dislocated workers into training programs. The lack of awareness of our workforce system could also use some work. Our existing workforce system accomplishes so many great things, yet not many know about it.

Opportunities: The large number of job openings was also seen as an opportunity for the region. Partners will continue to develop collaborative methods to provide integrated services to both job seekers and employers. The pandemic has put a focus on the need to develop technology-based methods to deliver coordinated services while maintaining capacity to provide in-person services.

Threats: The greatest threats to program operations are lingering effects of the pandemic, economic downturn, and lack of labor participation. We also continue to have residents migrating to other areas and states.

The regional partners also discussed the fact that we simply do not know enough about the cannabis industry.

Chapter 2 Section A Question 2: Analyze the capacity of the regional partners to provide workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce including individuals with barriers to employment.

Capacity: The Region is well-positioned to provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, including Underemployed / Unemployed, Ex-Offenders, Low Skill / Literacy Levels, Individuals with Disabilities, Substance Abuse, Older Americans, Out of School Youth, Adults who Lack a High School Diploma, Veterans, Homeless, ESL Individuals, Single Parents and Displaced Homemakers.

By taking a holistic approach and collaborating with core partners, the Region will be able to better serve at risk populations. These WIOA partners include Titles I, II, III and IV, ICCB – Perkins CTE, IDES, Aging, Corrections, and Community Action Agencies.

In furtherance of WIOA requirements, Priority of Service in the Region include:

- Veterans and eligible spouses in the following order or priority:
 - First, to veterans and eligible spouses (who also are included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds). This means that veterans and eligible spouses who also are recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals*, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds.
 - Second, to non-covered persons (individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
 - Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
 - Fourth, to any other populations identified by the Governor or Local Workforce Development Board for priority.
 - Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

- Recipients of Public Assistance such as those participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI). And/or any other State or local income-based public assistance.
- Other Low-Income Individuals, including those who:
 - Are in a family with total family income that does not exceed the higher of—(I) the poverty line; or (II) 70 percent of the lower living standard income level;
 - is a homeless individual (as defined in section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994), or a homeless child or youth (as defined under section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act)
 - receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act;
 - is a foster child on behalf of whom State or local government payments are made; or
 - is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the income requirement, but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet this requirement.
- Individuals who are basic skills deficient such as those who:
 - are a youth with English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or
 - are a youth or adult, that is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

Current Initiatives in the Region include:

LWIA 19 has the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Grant which provides education and training for individuals who are interested in the Trades and or Construction. The students will be certified with a nationally recognized MC3 certificate, as well as OSHA 10 hour and First Aide / CPR. This grant specifically targets individuals with barriers specifically to employment and is to promote equity within the Building Trades apprenticeship programs in the area. This grant will encompass EDR 1, aligning services to all underrepresented populations.

LWIA 19 has also received the JTED Grant which is a Job Training Economic Development Grant will provide services to the unemployed, under employed, persons with disabilities, and the underrepresented populations that include women, racial and ethnic minority groups. Additional barriers to be addressed may also include poor work habits, lack of stable job histories, low literacy skills, and poor understanding of basic reading and math concepts.

LWIA 19 QUEST Grant will aid with the dis located workers. It will assist with barriers that often make finding employment a challenge.

LWIA 19 - Supplemental Grants will be used to work with the in-school youth. This a project that will provide career exploration in occupations such as: Agriculture, Construction, and health care.

LWIA 19 is also currently working with community partners on an IFAB grant as well as a CEJA grant. The CEJA grant will give the same training as the Illinois Works however will allow the students to gain access to further training in the green industry and will allow LWIA 19 to connect with more green energy employers.

LWIA 19 is working with Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) to help assist with the hiring process for the Immigrants/Refugees. We have collaborated with several partners and meet with them regularly. Nine individuals have been identified who may be interested in employment opportunities at ADM. Concerns continue to be addressed in regards to language barriers, housing and skill level assessments. The One-Stop Center will be utilized to serve the customers (ADM/Immigrants) and referrals will be made to address all barriers.

LWIA 20 applied for and was awarded two QUEST grants. QUEST Program goals are to enhance the workforce system's ongoing efforts to empower America's unemployed and Under-employed workers by enabling individuals who have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic to enter, return to, or advance in high-quality jobs. The program is also focused on serving historically marginalized populations and individuals who reside in qualified census tracts and disproportionately impacted areas.

LWIA 20 was also awarded a State Supplemental Grant. In collaboration with IMEC this project specifically focuses on the manufacturing sector and connecting manufacturers to appropriate occupational skills training to engage and attract workers. Additional focus surrounds rural and non-metro counties.

LWIA 20 - Lincoln Land Community College continues to offer internships, externships, apprenticeships, and cooperative work experiences. They also now offer Help Desk certificates to students who hold full time positions with DoIt at the State of Illinois.

LWIA 21 also applied for and received 2 rounds of QUEST Grant funding, which allowed for more customers to be served under the expanded dislocated worker eligibility criteria. The Supplemental Funding Grant also provided flexible funding to be focused solely on serving area businesses through incumbent worker and work-based learning training projects. Staff from have also been participating in re-entry projects at two local prison facilities, opening up a larger pool of workers for the local business community.

Together LWIAs 19, 20, and 21 are also a part of the Statewide Initiative to serve returning citizens. Our mission is to educate and provide information on services that are available to incarcerated individuals who are nearing their release dates. These efforts are coordinated with IDOC and IDES so that returning citizens who are released from prisons are well informed and know how to access services in order to achieve occupational goals so that they can successfully transition back to their families and communities.

Together LWIAs 19, 20, and 21 are each operating Supplemental State Funding Grants focused on the manufacturing sector as a region. By aligning services, our Region will be able to expand employment opportunities for job seekers and Partners will collaborate to reduce duplication of services and better utilize resources.

Chapter 2 Section A Question 3: Analyze the capacity of the regional partners to provide activities to address the needs of employers.

The regional partners have continued to expand their capacity to address the needs of employers. Partners within each LWIA in the region collaborate to understand the skill needs of employers and implement appropriate responses. Some examples of how the partners work with employers to understand skill needs include:

Each of the LWIAs utilize Business Services Teams (BSTs) to meet with employers on a regular basis to discuss emerging skill needs. Our Regional Business Services Team meets monthly to discuss and address business needs.

Some examples of how the EDR 1 partners have worked to develop expanded services for employers include:

EDR 1's Regional Business Services Team previously planned an entire day that was dedicated to promoting the healthcare field and similar events are being considered for manufacturing and transportation, distribution and logistics (TDL) during the course of this plan.

Each LWIA has websites are detailed with employer/business services and contact information. Virtual Job Fair assistance, and utilization of the Illinois workNet events calendar are also available. LWIA 21's website is also now, newly interactive and allows businesses to register an account, post multiple job openings, and review resumes.

Supplemental funding grants place emphasis on work-based training for new and existing employees.

Local Workforce Area partners that make up the region have also provided workshops, post job openings, conduct employee screenings and referrals, workforce training, work-based training, tax credit information, business location advice, and various employer services. Each partner also works with high schools and community colleges in their workforce areas to provide and participate in career and occupational events and job fairs. These practices will continue as needs arise.

Chapter 2 Section A Question 4: How well do existing training programs in the region and local areas prepare job seekers to enter and retain employment with regional businesses?

The Central Region has numerous postsecondary institutions that provide a wide array of educational services, including five community colleges, seven BA-granting institutions, one public university, a medical school, two nursing colleges, one private two-year college, and two occupational schools.

The local areas provide services in coordination with their partners offering a variety of services to prepare job seekers to enter and retain employment with regional businesses by;

- Leading the way to convene boards and certify training programs.
- Coordinating, hosting, co-hosting various hiring events.
- Maintaining, sharing, and posting current job openings.

- Providing customized, one-on-one career counseling and job search assistance to job seekers.
- Coordination with partner placement services.
- Assisting with any work-related issues.
- Providing a minimum of one year of follow up services to participants to ensure sustained employment and job retention.

The below Table lists the existing postsecondary institutions in the region.

Central Region Postsecondary Institutions		
Institution	Location	Type
Blackburn College	700 College Avenue Carlinville, IL 62626	4-Year Private
Capital Area School of Practical Nursing	2201 Toronto Road Springfield, IL 62712-3803	Nursing
Heartland Community College	1500 W Raab Rd Normal, IL 61761	2-Year Public
Illinois College	1101 West College Jacksonville, IL 62650	4-Year Private
John Wood Community College	1301 South 48 th Street Quincy, IL 62305	2-Year Public
Lakeland Community College	5100 Lake Land Blvd Mattoon, IL 61938	2-Year Public
Lewis and Clark Community College	5800 Godfrey Road Godfrey, IL 62035	2-Year Public
Lincoln Christian University	100 Campus View Drive Lincoln, IL 62656	4-Year Private
Lincoln Land Community College	5250 Shepherd Road Springfield, IL 62794-9256	2-Year Public
Midwest Technical Institute	2731 Farmers Market Rd Springfield, IL 62707	Private Occupational
Millikin University	1184 West Main Street Decatur, IL 62522	4-Year Private
Richland Community College	One College Park Decatur, IL 62521	2-Year Public
Rotalbly's Nursing Institute	2560 E. Federal Dr., Suite 703, Decatur, IL 62526	Nursing
The Miller Academy School of Allied Health	1125 S 5 th Street Springfield, IL 62703	Nursing
Saint John's College of Nursing	729 East Carpenter Street Springfield, IL 62702	Nursing
Southern Illinois University - School of Medicine	P.O. Box 19624 Springfield, IL 62794-9624	Professional

Central Region Postsecondary Institutions		
Institution	Location	Type
University of Illinois at Springfield	One University Plaza - UHB 1015, Springfield, IL 62703	4-Year Public
University of Spa and Cosmetology Arts	2913 West White Oaks Drive Springfield, IL 62704	Private Occupational
160 Driving Academy	2935 East Clearlake Drive, Ste.2B, Springfield, IL 62702	Private Occupational

The Table below provides a count of graduates from each of the three community colleges that are physically located in the region. The columns show the graduates in each of the career clusters associated with the primary or secondary targeted sectors. The primary sectors are highlighted in green.

Illinois Community College Graduates by Career Cluster FY 2022, Central Region						
College	Health Science	Manufacturing	Transportation and Warehousing	Architecture and Construction	Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	Information Technology
Lewis & Clark	252	153	27	7	16	47
Lincoln Land	466	136	134	46	6	10
Richland	196	29	57	24	1	6
Central Total	914	318	218	77	23	63
State Total	14,246	3,830	684	2,285	951	2,424
% of State Total	6.41%	8.30%	32%	3.37%	2.42%	2.60%

*Note- IDES reported that TDL numbers were not included in the data packet as they were informed that some ICCB data is no longer available do to it being too difficult to accurately map. As a result, TDL numbers are estimated. This (Logistics) and On-The-Job training were also omitted because of data issues.

Chapter 2 Section A Question 5: Summarize the commitments of each program partner to implement the selected strategies described in the “Action Plan for Improving Service Integration in the Region.”

Through the MOU development process, each program partner in their respective LWIA has committed to the integration of workforce development services. The LWIA partners reached agreement on and worked on goals for Improving Service Integration within their LWIAs in the fall/winter of 2023.

Service integration will look different in each local area and local one-stop center, depending on the mix of services, staffing, and organizational culture. Service integration is achieved when workforce partners collaboratively determine how to align and coordinate services to meet clients' needs better. The EDR's goal is to support their local partners in identifying their current level of service integration and then support them in areas where growth is needed. To this end, the EDR 1 recognizes seven (7) functions provided by one-stops in Illinois:

1. Customer-Centered Design
2. Partner Staff
3. Intake And Assessment
4. Service
5. Career Pathways
6. Information
7. Evaluation

In accordance with the Regional Planning guidelines, the partners to EDR 1's plan is to select 3-5 goals from the Service Integration Assessment tool to focus on. The Partners recognize that the Service Integration Assessment goals may change over time and that this document formalizes the commitment at the LWIA level to continue the work of integration as it continues to evolve.

B. Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vi)). The plan must address the following sections:

Chapter 2 Section B Question 1: What regional organizations currently provide or could provide supportive services?

The regional organizations that currently provide or could provide supportive services include:

Supportive Service	Provider-
Childcare	• Catholic Charities • DHS/ Community Child Care Connections • WIOA Title 1
Clothing	• Catholic Charities • Community Action Agencies • Good Will Industries • Salvation Army
Food	• Catholic Charities • Department of Human Services • Food Pantries • Salvation Army • United Way
Health	• Department of Human Services • Veteran's Affairs • County Health Departments
Housing	• Catholic Charities • Community Action Agencies • Department of Human Services • Good Will Industries • Salvation Army • United Way • Veteran's Affairs • Housing Authorities • Youth Service Programs • Homeless Shelters
Transportation	• WIOA Title 1 • Mass Transit Districts • SMART
Utilities	• Catholic Charities • Community Action Agencies
Other	• Walmart Community Grant

Chapter 2 Section B Question 2: What policies and procedures will be established to promote coordination of supportive services delivery?

Local workforce areas have supportive service policies in place that promote coordination among community providers. Customers entering training must apply to Community Child Care Connections and Child Care Resource Services (CCRS) through IDHS for childcare funding prior to supportive services being awarded by WIOA.

Transportation is more difficult to coordinate as mass transit and rural transportation organizations require payment even if it is a minimal amount. LWIA 20 utilizes SMART Transport (Sangamon Menard Transportation) to provide transportation services.

The partners will work through the MOU process to identify better ways to promote coordination of supportive services. Each LWIA has developed a transportation and childcare provider list.

LWIA 19 will promote coordination of supportive services by working with the Department of Rehabilitation to participate in the Transition Fair in the High schools. They are also working closely with the Macon County Continuum of Care and Homeless Advisory Council. It is an Advisory Board for supportive services and agencies in the local area. They also have a partnership with the (DOVE) Domestic Violence program for the JTED grant. The partnership helps better serve their historically marginalized populations. The Director of LWIA 19 is on the Advisory Board, and is working with the Decatur Jobs Council to assist individuals who are seeking education and employment training. LWIA 19 also participates in the Parent University at both of the high schools.

LWIA 19 has also utilized supplemental funding from the Community Foundation of Macon County to help individuals who are already working in childcare facilities to obtain their childcare certifications.

LWIA 20 coordinates services on a monthly basis with its Service Coordination group composed of Sangamon County and the ROSC Council. Similar community service coordination meetings are also attended by County Liaisons in Cass, Christian, Logan, and Menard counties. The SC Community Action organization and CSBG partner also serves on the LWIB and participates in regularly scheduled partner meetings. The Director of LWIA 20 serves on the CSBG Advisory Council.

LWIA 21 utilizes Macoupin County Public Transportation, West Central Mass Transit, Central Illinois Public Transit and Tri-County Rural Transit for its transportation services.

LWIA 21 has also utilized a supplemental Walmart community grant for support services that may not fall under the traditional policies.

EDR 1 also utilizes an On-Line Service Finder System that is hosted on the Illinois workNet website along with its public events calendar at <https://apps.illinoisworknet.com/Calendar/>.

The LWIAs will continue exploring development of a regional intake form for accessing supportive services as appropriate.

C. Describe the coordination of services with regional economic development services and WIOA service providers (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vii)). The plan must address the following sections

Chapter 2 Section C Question 1: What economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses are actively engaged in regional planning?

The following economic development organizations are engaged in regional planning:

- Springfield/Sangamon Growth Alliance is focused on transforming the economy of Sangamon County.
- City of Springfield – The City is dedicated to being on the cutting edge of technological, social and cultural advances which means fostering an environment that provides flexibility and ample resources. Springfield offers those benefits along with a skilled, educated workforce and tremendous quality of life.
- City of Decatur – The City offers a Dynamic Business Climate, Productive Workforce, Wonderful Quality of Life, and prides itself on being a city in which Illinoisans want to locate or expand their businesses.
- Decatur Regional Chamber of Commerce - With more than 125 years serving as the "Voice of Business" for the Decatur community, the Decatur Regional Chamber of Commerce is proud to promote opportunity and prosperity in local commerce. The chamber advocates on behalf of members for business-friendly legislation and offers programs, services, and networking opportunities to help make local business thrive and grow.
- Economic Development Corporation for Decatur and Macon County - The EDC of Decatur & Macon County is a public/private nonprofit dedicated to the attraction, expansion and retention of businesses to the area. When companies need help, the EDC are there to help with tools and resources such as employee training, GIS data mapping, location and demographic research, workforce studies, and more.
- Innovate Springfield – Springfield's university-led business incubator.
- City of Litchfield - The City of Litchfield is dedicated to providing high quality customer service to the community. A Commitment and a strong sense of pride enables the city to remain at the forefront of municipal advancement.
- Lincoln Economic Advancement & Development- LEAD's mission is to empower the city of Lincoln's economic health and vitality. LEAD works to further the economic prosperity of our businesses, our residents, and our community.
- Various Staffing and Employment Agencies

- Regional Planning Commissions - Planning Commissions are involved in many activities of interest to municipal officials in the planning region, state and federal agencies with which they interact, and the general public.
- University of Illinois/ Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation - We have several governing businesses who strive to improve the communities that they serve. Our strength lies in our private and public partnerships. Our goal is to promote our cities for development opportunities, but also to help businesses thrive and expand within Montgomery County.
- LLCC, CACC, District #186- Education Partners who are interested in economic development and business success in the region.
- IMEC –IMEC is a team of improvement specialists and technicians dedicated to providing organizations in Illinois with the tools and techniques to create sustainable competitive futures. The experienced hands-on team at IMEC works closely with its clients to plan critical business improvements in the areas of Leadership, Strategy, Customer Engagement, Operations, and Workforce.

Chapter 2 Section C Question 2: What economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses were invited to participate but declined?

None of the invited economic development organizations or business declined to participate.

D. Describe the coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate (§ 679.510(a)(1)(v)).

Each of the Local Workforce Development Areas in the region has developed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and its One-Stop system infrastructure and system cost allocation. These MOUs and One-Stop system budgets are submitted separately to the State in the spring of each year. The MOUs for PY 2023 were approved, submitted, and are currently in place through June 30, 2024. The PY 2024 MOUs are in the beginning stages of development. They will be approved by the Local Boards and will be submitted when signatures are garnered prior to June 30. The PY 2024 MOU will begin July 1, 2024. The regional partners participate in local MOU negotiations and commit to a good-faith effort when developing appropriate cost sharing arrangements that are consistent with our broader strategies for service integration and coordination as outlined in this plan.

The LWIAs in the Central Region have arranged to coordinate administrative costs through various means including pooling funds for initiatives, free or nominal meeting space and staff time and efforts supported by respective partners.

E. Describe how *responsiveness, inclusivity and accessibility* is or will be incorporated in the regional service integration strategies, including the coordination of service delivery strategies to job seekers and employers.

The Regional Partners will take the following steps to incorporate responsiveness, inclusivity and accessibility into integration and delivery of services:

- LWIAs 19, 20 and 21 applied for and received two QUEST, National Dislocated Worker Grants. QUEST stands for Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy & Training. These grants have greatly enhanced the EDR's ability to be more inclusive.
- LWIA 19 has entered into a new partnership to form an Adult Education Consortium with Richland Community College's Adult Education Department. The Consortium offers bridge classes, High School Equivalency and English Language Learner classes at the Decatur Public Library. This partnership offers more services to the students/customers to better prepare them for the workforce. Students served in this partnership include under represented populations.
- LWIA 19 applied for and received the Illinois Works pre-apprenticeship grant. This grant allows LWIA 19 to provide a pre-apprenticeship program to open Career Pathways in the Construction Industry for the underrepresented populations in the area including women, people of color, and veterans.
- Targeting underserved populations to allow for an inclusive culture within workforce development.
- Identify barriers to accessing services including lack of technology, transportation or childcare.
- Explore resources to address digital literacy barriers to participation in workforce development programs.
- Work towards being mindful of who is at the table for decision making, discussions, grant and application planning to develop environments where each partner understands goals and feels heard.
- Look at expanding support service policies to better equip individuals for success.
- Provide RIA training and resources to staff, partners, and the business community.
- In addition to offering RIA training to area manufacturers through the Supplemental Funding Grant there has been a concerted effort to reach and document the harder to serve individuals through work-based learning projects. For example, the majority of incumbent worker training participants under the current grant in LWIA 21 have been female. This is non-traditional in the manufacturing sector. The project also included a female owned and operated company.

Chapter 3 – Vision, Goals and Implementation Strategies – Regional Component

This section will outline how the Local Board(s) will coordinate the regional workforce, education and economic development activities with regional activities that are carried out in the local areas. The responses must illustrate that business, education and workforce development stakeholders have provided input and are involved with the development of the strategies and to ensure alignment with other plans.

A. Describe the local strategic vision to support state and regional economic growth (§ 679.560(a)(5)). Describe how this aligns with the State of Illinois' vision and principles (page 1). Include a description of how the region and local areas will accomplish the local strategic vision and support state and regional economic growth.

The Central Economic Development Region 1 has adopted the State of Illinois strategic vision to support regional economic growth. This will be accomplished by;

- EDR 1 will meet employers, jobseekers, and community members where they are, centering the customer experience in an interoperable, equitable, and accessible manner to ensure all customers achieve their goals. We will support employers by building diverse, quality career pathways and provide effective training, education, and economic opportunities for job seekers and communities to thrive.
- EDR 1 will assist with enhancing employers' abilities to hire and retain skilled workers that meet their emerging needs.
 - IWT Projects
 - Provide high tech, innovative, advanced technologies and manufacturing training
 - Host hiring events for employers
 - Plan sector-based manufacturing events in October
- EDR 1 will utilize customer-centered and data-informed practices to improve the quality of the jobseeker experience in pursuing fulfilling career pathways in a manner that is equitable and accessible.
 - Monitor customer experiences and survey results
 - Improve customer survey data

B. Describe the local goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment) and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators (§ 677.155(a)(1)). Include a description of how the region and local areas will accomplish local goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and goals relating to performance.

The regional partners have considered the overall needs of their respective communities, the challenges of businesses and job seekers and the existing capacity of the workforce development system to respond to these needs. We have adopted the following goals to guide our work together during the next few years:

1. Develop and expand career pathways. The Region will continually review the existing pathways to determine what skilled jobs exist. Upon identification, the region will target our training and educational resources to expand access for individuals, including those with barriers, to such jobs.
2. Expand the use of the full range of work-based learning models for training, including work experience, internships, transitional employment, on-the-job training, apprenticeships and incumbent worker training.
3. Work with the local Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development representatives to research the development of talent pipelines within targeted industry sectors.
4. Continue to research and improve initiatives for assessing and improving the essential skills of our customers.
5. Continue to target historically marginalized populations to reduce barriers in order to assist with attainment of self-sustaining employment opportunities.

To attain these goals the region will adapt to continue to strengthen efforts to use technology to deliver services. Business Services Teams will work with employers to identify their needs and how we can meet them while maintaining their safety and the safety of their workforce. For those seeking employment and training services we will work to increase access through remote learning and virtual intakes, orientations and employment assistance.

With respect to the performance accountability measures required in WIOA and the implementing rule, the LWIAs in the Central Region individually negotiated and reached agreement with the State on local levels of performance for performance accountability measures. Negotiations occur every other year for a two-year period and measures are in place. In addition, partners will actively engage in whatever process is implemented by the respective state agencies for negotiating and setting targets for these measures. The goals for the Title I programs are set through the use of a statistical adjustment model. These procedures are in place and the partners consult with their respective state agency contacts and meet to discuss the implications of the performance measures and required targets for service delivery and integration. The Core Partners work cooperatively to report performance outcomes across all programs to advance the goals of improving access and success for all customers. However, currently there is no universal or shared system for Partners to communicate performance and anything related to customers.

Appendix 1 includes the negotiated Title I performance goals for each of the three LWIAs that comprise the region.

C. Provide a description of the regional and local strategies that will achieve the vision and principles. This must include a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local areas:

Chapter 3 Section C Question 1: To facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(b)(3)(i));

We will use our Workforce Boards and Regional Business Services Team to create strategies for employer engagement and to lead engagement efforts for specific industries, particularly for the primary targeted sectors.

We will regularly review and incorporate business engagement strategies developed by the IWIB Business Engagement Committee to help bridge any gaps between business sectors, businesses, and the workforce development system.

We will continue to work with the community college advisory committees to leverage the work of these committees to inform our planning and policies for career pathway development, and to help ensure that these advisory committees benefit from the perspectives of the workforce system. Program advisory committees exist for each AAS/AAA programs offered by the community colleges. They also have procedures for garnering employer input into the skill needs of the occupations for which the programs prepare students.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the goal for the region's Next Generation partnerships is to have one top tier industry meet annually to address all issues and concerns for the region. These events will encompass employers, Chambers of Commerce, and Economic Development organizations and will discuss all issues that the companies are experiencing, including workforce concerns. At the end of the 2024-2028 regional plan we will have met with all three top tier industries and will have outcomes that show how we addressed their workforce matters.

Chapter 3 Section C Question 2: To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(3)(ii));

EDR 1 will work with Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development organizations to coordinate our outreach efforts to employers. The focus of this effort will be more oriented toward marketing the services of the workforce development system to regional employers as part of the overall economic development business retention effort.

We will also use our Regional Business Services Team to coordinate engagement of employers. The focus of this effort will be oriented toward responding to the specific workforce needs of individual employers who come to the attention of any of the business service personnel of the regional partners.

Examples of the work being done by our Business Services Teams in each LWIA are described below:

LWA 19: LWIA 19's Business Services Team (BST) meets monthly. The Team helps with planning and organizing sector-based career fairs. A Manufacturing Day is usually held in October and a Healthcare Day is usually held in April of every year. The target population for the fairs are middle school students and high school juniors and seniors.

LWIA 19 will create a monthly employment calendar designed to serve customers who enter the local One Stop, American Job Center. The calendar will provide employment workshops and hiring event dates, as well information sessions for Pre-Apprenticeships class or Bridge classes. This will look like a flyer, and the

customer can leave with it. It will also be available at the Decatur Public Library, One Stop Partners, and the Workforce Board.

LWA 20: The goal of the Business Services Team is to organize who attends job fairs, communicates with and meets with businesses, etc. The goal is to be one organized unit gathering and sharing data to address employer's needs. One document was created to highlight all of the team members and includes their contact information. This is presented to employers at business visits so they can see which organization can address their specific concerns. In addition to providing customized services to businesses based on their needs, the team also attends and participates in various local job fairs.

- Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce (2 per year) – Partner
- Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce Job Fair
- Veterans Job Fair (Held at the American Legions' State Conference) – partner
- The Greater Taylorville Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Awareness Day
- Assist with Virtual Job Fair development
- Customized Hiring Events
- Customized Job Fairs for major lay-off events
- Develop and market materials for businesses
- LLCC Workforce Institute Career Fair
- UIS Career Connections Expo
- IDES virtual job search workshop series

LWA 21: The LWIA 21 BST meets on an every other month cycle with a goal to host annual Job Fairs to recruit employers and help administer the fairs. We have developed a good working relationship with LLCC and LCCC as well as other partners to have successful Job fairs. The Lincoln Land Community College event is held in the fall at the Litchfield Campus, while the other is at the Main Campus of Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey, Illinois each spring. Once the Job Fairs are over, we post on our websites all the employers that were present and what jobs they are recruiting for to continually help support their recruitment efforts.

Other events that the LWIA 21 BST help support are listed below:

- The Shelby Manor Bounce Back
- Shelbyville High School Job Fair
- National Health Care Month Job Fair - Memorial in Jacksonville
- Greene County Health Fair (White Hall)
- Re-Entry Summit (Jacksonville and Hillsboro)
- Carlinville High Career Day
- North Greene High School Career Day
- Gillespie High School Career Day
- Macoupin County Adult Education at LCCC (Staunton and Carlinville)

Chapter 3 Section C Question 3: To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development (§ 679.560(b)(3)(iii));

The Economic Development community of EDR 1 primarily serves as a link between local businesses and workforce development initiatives through their Business Development & Retention programs. These programs will provide feedback from employers concerning the state of employment and recruitment. This information allows for a more holistic response from workforce partners as employers needs evolve.

EDR 1 Economic Development partners are invited to and participate in quarterly regional partner meetings. Each LWIA also meets on a regular basis with their local economic development partners.

Chapter 3 Section C Question 4: To strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs (§ 679.560(b)(3)(iv));

Process mapping may be used, when needed, to identify the services provided by the partners, therefore eliminating any overlapping services. The continual goal is to streamline the delivery of services for customers. A common Intake Assessment Tool has been developed, as discussed in the previous plan, with input from all partners in order to assess the customers' needs more effectively. All staff are now cross trained in all partner programs in order to better recognize the needs of the customer; another goal that was listed in the previous regional plan. Partner staff will continue to be immediately accessible to client's as they enter the One Stop and have their needs met with any onsite partner and through the direct linkage system.

Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) is the State employment office for Illinois businesses and workers, providing no-cost human resources solutions linking hiring businesses to qualified job seekers. The office has designated staff members that focus on Wagner-Peyser/Employment Services (WP/ES) offered to job seekers. In addition, current resource room staff have been trained on WP/ES services and can assist any customer with questions.

Work search services will continue to be offered to the RESEA population and these services are designed to assist job seekers to return to the workforce as quickly as possible. WP/ES offers work search assistance via one-on-one services or virtual workshops and events. One-Stop staff collaboratively develops and maintains connections with partner and community organizations. These connections are essential when a barrier to employment has been identified. WP/ES staff focuses on job seekers who are receiving unemployment insurance benefits to encourage economic growth and stability.

Employment services include the state labor exchange system (illinoisjoblink.com), resume preparation assistance, on-line job search & application techniques, interviewing techniques and job matching in IJL. WP/ES staff are prepared to provide job seekers with information on all programs and services provided by IDES. This includes but is not limited to: Veterans, Work Opportunity Tax Credits, IllinoisJobLink.com (IJL), The Illinois Career Information System, Labor Market Information, Hire the Future, and Re-Entry Service Programs.

Through outreach conducted via phone and emails and social media, we notify job seeking customers of ongoing workshops, job fairs, on-site hiring events, and partner and employer orientations. IWDS and IJL are used to track and record referrals to job opportunities, partner services, community services and service delivery. The One Stop staff references employer information to identify employment opportunities for job seekers. WP/ES staff, along with the Business Services team review job orders to understand the job description, qualifications and requirements of available positions within an organization to help ensure that employers are receiving the most qualified candidates.

Chapter 3 Section C Question 5: To promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services (§ 679.560(b)(4)); and

Concerning the Decatur IL, MSA, the following organizations are active in business development for this area:

- SCORE – A national network of business start-up mentoring and planning experts providing training, insight and general support.
- Midwest Inland Port (Business Development Resource Center) – A centralized point of contact for all available community and regional services providing referrals and directional advice to potential new businesses.
- Center for Entrepreneurship - A dedicated resource for entrepreneurs at every level. Through a variety of programs and development opportunities, The Center serves Millikin faculty and students, youth (ranging in age from elementary to high school level), community, and local businesses.
- SBDC - Illinois Small Business Development Centers are located throughout the state and provide information, confidential business guidance, training and other resources to start-up and existing small businesses.

In the Springfield, IL, MSA, the following are some of the organizations involved in business development:

- The Illinois Small Business Development Center at Lincoln Land Community College is the main provider of services that support the establishment and expansion of small business in our local area. Services include classes, one-on-one counseling, assistance with business plan development and loan applications, marketing plan development, etc.
- Local Chambers of Commerce, such as The Greater Springfield Chamber also provide support for existing businesses to help them flourish and expand, as well as attract new companies to relocate to this area.

Innovate Springfield (iSPI), a division of the University of Illinois system, is a downtown business incubator in Springfield that offers a synergistic environment, office space for rent and many other resources to help fledgling companies address various needs including financial, IT, marketing and networking.

Sangamon CEO is one of many like programs in the state that introduce entrepreneurship to high school students. It is a year-long program where students develop their own businesses while receiving entrepreneurship training at various local company facilities.

CEO programs also exist in the counties of LWIA 21 at many of its area high schools that introduce entrepreneurial concepts and programs to its students. Many of the local chambers and economic development organizations, along with SCORE and the SIUE Small Business Development Center, provide important information, training and resources for adults interesting in starting their own business.

Lewis and Clark Community College also offers an entrepreneurship certificate as part of their Management Degree program.

Chapter 3 Section C Question 6: To implement initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers (§ 679.560(b)(3)(v)).

The regional partners discuss at their regional meetings how their Business Services Teams can continue to support the regional sector strategies. This continues to allow the regional team to leverage its resources, and provides a more robust menu of work-based learning opportunities to area businesses, including incumbent worker training, OJT opportunities, apprenticeships, and customized training needs.

The partners will continue to examine possible Regional Career Pathways. This helps identify opportunities for expansion and access to existing career pathways as well as acknowledge unmet skill needs of businesses that may be addressed through the development of new career pathway programs or modification of existing pathways.

EDR 1 also has partnerships with manufacturers which have increased along with the need for incumbent training. EDR 1 has also greatly increased its focus on work-based learning initiatives, especially within the manufacturing field. This has specifically led to incumbent worker training projects being implemented in partnership with two local manufacturers as part of their efforts to expand their facilities and retain & upskill their current workforce while also creating additional job opportunities.

The need for incumbent worker training has been growing as businesses are faced with hiring shortages. It is also a great option to help increase retention and increase production with less.

D. Describe regional strategies that will increase apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities.

Each of the LWIAs of EDR 1 have been awarded a State Supplemental Grant, and are working together on a regional level to focus on work-based learning opportunities in Manufacturing.

EDR 1 encourages, promotes, and funds all registered apprenticeship programs.

Through Individual Training Accounts community college students are funded for electrical lineman training leading to Lineman apprenticeship opportunities with municipalities and Ameren.

The Illinois Department of Transportation has funded the IDOT Highway Construction Careers Training Programs at the regional community colleges to expand the number of individuals served from historically underrepresented populations who enter a highway construction career. Participants also have the opportunity to enter apprenticeships with the trades.

LWIA's 19 and 20 both currently fund programs that focus on pre-apprenticeships. These programs also expand access and the pathway for underrepresented groups into apprenticeship programs.

EDR 1 will continue to work on additional strategies throughout the course of this plan to expand apprenticeship engagements and work-based learning opportunities.

E. Describe initiatives to shorten the time from credential to employment and address how the area will work with the education system to begin putting training opportunities in place to meet this strategy.

The region has undertaken several initiatives that are intended to shorten the time from credential to employment, in collaboration with its community colleges.

EDR 1 staff educate job seekers on skills-based labor market information.

Short-term credentials are one of the focuses of EDR 1 funding. We help convene and engage businesses with training providers to help address needs. Short-term credentials can provide a dual benefit for some as it affords them the opportunity to quickly earn higher wages, and can also help them on a path to further their education as well. They serve as a stepping stone to a career ladder, and assist busy students, young adults, and single parents so that they have the supports they need.

Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC):

Workforce Training Offerings: The Medical District is a partnership with Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) and Central Management Services (CMS). This unique partnership was formed to serve the technology training needs of local organizations through scheduled courses and their customized training programs.

Pre-Apprenticeship Programming: LLCC offers the Highway Construction Careers Training Program that regularly leads students to apprenticeships within the trades. IDOT has funded this program to expand the number of people in historically underrepresented populations who enter a construction career.

LLCC continues to offer internships, clinicals, and Cooperative Work Experience credits in various programs that are available to students. LLCC has recently undertaken a project to catalog work-based learning that is available to its students and is working on updates to definitions, terminology, and processes for these.

LLCC recently started a DoIt program to offer Help Desk certificates to students who currently hold full-time employment with the State of Illinois. This is a three-semester certification program that students can complete online while they are receiving a salary from DoIt.

F. Describe the steps that will be taken to support the state's efforts to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development including:

Chapter 3 Section F Question 1: Fostering the improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors that are the engine of economic growth for the state and its regions.

The region will foster the improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors through the following efforts.

1. We will work with our economic development partners within our region to identify existing partnerships and initiatives with employers in our key sectors.
2. We will identify local employers willing to provide expertise to our sector initiatives.
3. We will work with community partners to organize and or expand work within existing partnerships or create new partnerships.
4. We will work towards being more proactive rather than reactive.
5. Utilize and leverage the strength of our boards, members in key sectors, encourage involvement and increase knowledge.
6. Foster relationships with invitations to meetings and to One Stop Centers.

Chapter 3 Section F Question 2: Expanding career pathway opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings.

Lincoln Land Community College offers various Bridge and IET programs catering to specific career fields. Some noteworthy programs include:

- Healthcare:
 - Bridge to Healthcare Careers – This program allows students to explore careers in healthcare while strengthening their basic reading and math skills.
 - Bridge to CNA (Pre-CNA) – Students are introduced to key concepts in the CTE course, preparing them for success in the certificate program.
 - CNA Skill Building (IET) – A support class running concurrently with the CTE course to review major course material, teach effective study skills, strengthen CNA math and reading, and learn practical abilities such as time management and teamwork. The primary goal is to

empower students with essential skills, enabling them to secure their Illinois CNA license and enter the workforce or continue with additional education/training.

- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics:
 - Bridge to Automotive Technology Careers – Students explore career pathways in the automotive industry (Auto and Diesel Technologies) and strengthen industry vocabulary, tools, and operations.
 - Diesel Technologies IET – A support class running concurrently with the with the AAS program during the first semester. Students will review major course material concepts, communication processes, basic reading, and math skills. Successful completion will grant students four industry-recognized credentials that will help them enter the diesel labor force to perform entry level jobs and/or continue their education/training.
 - Auto Technology IET – Similar to the Diesel Technologies program, this support class runs concurrently with the AAS and the short-term certificate programs during the first semester. Students will review major course material concepts, strengthen Auto Tech vocabulary, tools, and operations. Students will earn two industry-recognized credentials that will help students enter the auto labor force to perform entry level jobs and/or continue their education/training.
- Career Pathway:
 - College and Career Readiness – Students will engage in boot camp sessions, workshops, and virtual activities to foster awareness and inspiring participation in LLCC Career Pathways.

Chapter 3 Section F Question 3: Expanding career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services.

The partners will continue to work with local community groups to identify individuals who might benefit from WIOA services. We recognize that in order for customers with significant barriers to employment to be successful, basic needs, essential skills, education barriers, perceptions of work, peer pressure and a range of issues have to be addressed. Career services now include and will continue to include support and counseling services from trained workforce development professionals.

LWIA 19 partnered with DOVE for a JTED training opportunity. There were several information sessions held on site at DOVE as well as the Workforce Office and the Decatur Public Library. Once we had recruited 10 students we enrolled them with a Career Planner. The customers were scheduled to attend a BRIDGE class in Hospitality. It was a 6-week class that will focus on math and reading skills. The last two weeks of class the Career Planner will spend time working with employers to provide a place for employment while JTED provides funding for a paid work experience. The goals are to prepare them for the world of work. The Introduction to Hospitality also invites chefs to the class along with managers of hotels and restaurants. The case management is intensive and many barriers were reduced but several customers were able to complete the class and keep employment.

LWIA 20 has collaborated with local community colleges and other local training providers and their admissions departments to assess the WIOA Title I application and eligibility during the initial admissions

process, therefore acknowledging customers in a more streamlined manner. In addition, they offer direct short cuts and links to access our services from their computer labs. LWIA 20 staff also attend and participate in various training provider orientation sessions to ensure that individuals know and understand how to access our services. We are also equipped to provide mobile career services when necessary.

LWIA 21 has utilized the QUEST Grant funding along with an expanded supportive services policy to better equip the harder-to-serve customers with their barriers as they navigate their way through a successful career pathway. In addition, staff and partners receive ongoing cross-training. Especially, as it relates to career pathways, as a way to integrate and improve career services. An improved referral system within LWIA 21 has also provide more opportunities for customers to fully access the services that are available within the partner network. A Walmart Community Grant also helps those in need of an immediate or emergency service that may not be covered under WIOA.

The partners will also continue to expand career services and opportunities while working with employers who are willing to work with persons facing barriers. Community partner organizations will continue to work together and find the most effective ways to identify and serve nontraditional participants. The regional goal is to assist customers in being completely self-sufficient.

Chapter 3 Section G: Describe how goals established in this plan will be monitored and evaluated.

EDR 1 partners intend to work towards developing a plan and tool to monitor and evaluate our regional plan goals. We plan to;

- Continue to explore evaluation options and tools.
- Look at developing a document/check list of our goals which could be periodically or annually reviewed.
- Consider utilizing a third party such as UIS to create an assessment tool.

Chapter 3 Section H: Describe how responsiveness, inclusivity, and accessibility is or will be incorporated in the implementation of regional workforce, education, and economic development strategies.

The Regional Partners will take the following steps to incorporate responsiveness, inclusivity and accessibility into implementation of regional workforce, education, and economic development strategies:

- Acknowledge and respect diversity and inclusion.
- Target outreach to other organizations serving historically marginalized populations.
- QR codes will be added to flyers to more easily provide information and simplify access to services.
- Avoid using unfamiliar acronyms, abbreviations, and terms in materials.

- Build upon existing RIA initiatives in the community and with the community colleges to expand across workforce and economic development efforts in the region.
- Continue to identify barriers to accessing services including lack of technology, transportation, childcare, etc.
- Added RIA to regional supplemental funding initiatives and projects.
- Explore resources to address digital literacy barriers for participation in workforce development programs.
- Participate in workshops and training to address equity issues.