



STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY

"Expanding Career Pathway Opportunities in Adult Education"
(2018-2023)

Executive Summary

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Adult Education in Illinois has a rich history of providing services that assist adults in improving their skills, achieving their educational goals, and transitioning to further education or employment. Illinois' Adult Education system is an essential partner in ensuring we have an educated workforce to meet the needs of Illinois' employers. Adult Education and its partners are working toward the same goals: providing for the educational and training needs of all learners and increasing the number of residents with high-quality postsecondary and industry-recognized credentials and degrees to meet the demands of Illinois' changing economy. As such, the strategies outlined in this plan will guide the system's efforts over the next five years and beyond.

VISION STATEMENT

In partnership with other stakeholders, we will create learning opportunities that align with statewide education, training, and employment strategies to *ensure all adult learners* have access to and success across services that are cohesive, coordinated, and innovative to promote better economic opportunities, greater equity, and sustainable career pathways.

STRATEGIC PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Responsiveness and Access
- Innovation
- Collaboration and Alignment
- Professional Development and Training
- Accountability
- Technology



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Goal 1: Improve Outcomes by Scaling Effective Models and Strategies Across the System

- Building, expanding and scaling comprehensive career pathways systems, and create the conditions across every Adult Education program to find breakthrough ways of expanding these proven models.

Goal 2: Increase Postsecondary Transitions and Credential Attainment

- Recognizing that access to postsecondary education is not enough, but also ensure students are accessing postsecondary education and earning credentials that are in demand.

Goal 3: Strengthen College and Career Readiness

- College and career readiness for underprepared adult students is critical to overall success. Increasingly, students entering the workforce are discovering that they need critical knowledge and skills that are used in the workplace.

Goal 4: Develop Life-long Career Pathway Systems & Enabling Technologies

- Strategizing for career and life options while meeting the diverse and context-specific learning needs of various age groups, including the acquisition of basic literacy, and technical skills through both formal education and effective alternative pathways to learning.

ILLINOIS ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY

The dynamics of today's new economy demand that the state's Adult Education system respond in stronger and more effective ways. The statistics are compelling: More than 1 million Illinois residents do not have a high school credential, approximately 1.78 million (about 14.2 percent of the population) are immigrants, and at least a quarter of a million U.S. citizens in Illinois live with a family member who is undocumented.¹

With Illinois Adult Education serving about **81,000** students annually, representing a penetration rate of four to eight percent, a tremendous need for scale exists in our state.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 40

Illinois Senate Joint Resolution (SJR) 40 was passed in July 2017, creating the ***Statewide Taskforce on the Future Direction of Adult Education and Literacy*** within the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). The 25 taskforce members represent critical stakeholders: legislators; state commerce and economic opportunity agencies; employment security and human services agencies; Adult Education system leaders and practitioners; presidents of higher education institutions; representatives of workforce development and philanthropy; K-12 educators; and community-based organizations.

The taskforce's responsibility is to ensure the development of a strategic five-year plan that charts a progressive course for the state's nationally recognized Adult Education and Literacy Program. The plan addresses the need for continued development of comprehensive career pathways, college and career readiness, transitions from Adult Education programs to college and employment, foundational learning, basic Literacy and English-language skills, and lifelong learning and technology integration.

PRIMARY FOCUS

This plan is focused on *expanding and scaling* comprehensive career pathways that have been successfully implemented across the state, and is proactively *responding to a future of work* that will demand advanced skills and training in the new economy. A postsecondary education, particularly industry recognized and with stackable credentials related to jobs in demand, is the single most

Strategies to support this transition and credential outcomes are key given that, by 2020, 70 percent of the jobs in Illinois will require some postsecondary education and training beyond high school.³

important factor for explaining differences in workers' lifetime earnings and incomes. The future of work has significant consequences for underprepared adult learners. The changing nature of work is shortening the shelf life of job-specific skills, with technology and automation affecting millions of jobs. The impact of these changes will be felt disproportionately by people on the lower end of the economic ladder.² If we fail to prepare the people of Illinois for the future economy, there is a real possibility that our state's underprepared adult learners will face substantial challenges and limited career opportunities.

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¹ American Immigration Council. Fact Sheet: Immigrants in Illinois. October 2017. www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org.

² Bakshi, H., Downing, J., Osborne, M. & Schneider, P. *The Future of Skills: Employment in 2030*. 2017. London: Pearson and Nesta, Oxford Martin School.

³ Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N. & Strohl, J. "Recovery job growth and education requirements through 2020." 2013. Georgetown University.