

FUTURE OF THE ILLINOIS WORKFORCE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Introduction

USA Funds has selected Illinois to pilot a technical assistance program which facilitates alignment between industry demand and education and training supply in four (4) Illinois regions. Recent studies have shown high demand for college credentials at every level, from industry recognized credentials to baccalaureate degrees and above. For example, a recent study of job applications in Illinois in 2014-15 showed that 54% of advertised jobs required a bachelor's degree. Currently only about 19% of Illinois' workforce has that degree. Applications are being accepted from communities interested in utilizing the principles of collective impact theory to assist them in preparing for the workforce of the future. As part of USA Funds' "Competition with a Purpose" program, the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) will coordinate technical assistance at no cost to selected communities from August 2016 through June 2017.

Program Information

Communities, which for the purposes of this grant are defined as regional areas that include economic development, workforce development, and educational partnerships within an identified geographic area, will be selected to receive technical assistance from workforce and economic development experts coordinated by the CAEL and IBHE using resources from multiple state agencies and national partners. IBHE is the Illinois higher education coordinating board working in partnership with other state agencies, colleges, and external stakeholders to maximize higher education's impact on Illinois' progress (<http://www.ibhe.org>). CAEL is one of the leading non-profits in the country supporting higher education's ability to serve adult learners and workforce needs, including productive partnerships between higher education and employers (<http://www.cael.org>). Together they have been chosen by USA Funds to strengthen the connection between college completion and successful careers in Illinois through implementation of the recommendations of the IBHE led [Commission on the Future of the Workforce](#).

Activities will be individualized to meet a community where they are with their existing college completion and workforce development strategies and activities, and then equip them with the tools necessary to take the next steps by engaging state agencies, nonprofits, and others in and outside Illinois who are best positioned to serve the needs of the region. Once selected, CAEL and IBHE will work with each community to customize technical assistance in the following areas:

- **Industry Analysis** - Each community can identify one (1) targeted industry sector to serve as the focus of technical assistance activity. CAEL will then perform an industry sector analysis for the region including industry concentration, subsectors, growth opportunity,

in-demand jobs, etc.

- **Educational Asset Inventory** - CAEL will take inventory of educational assets and programs within the region that are aligned to, and help produce human capital for, the identified focus industry sector. Human capital development efforts will span the postsecondary credential continuum from sub-associate certificates to graduate degrees depending on regional needs.
- **Gaps Analysis** - CAEL will compare the industry analysis and education asset inventory and identify gaps and redundancies in the region's workforce and education pipeline.
- **Assessment of Postsecondary Institutions** - Each community will have the opportunity for three (3) postsecondary organizations to go through the Adult Learning Focused Institution (ALFI) assessment designed to help the institutions benchmark how well they are serving adult learners.
- **Collective Impact Capacity Building** - Convening support will be provided to regional partners to assess their progress in developing effective collective impact efforts including work to define or reinforce goals, metrics, and shared strategies for improving the college-to-career transition, and identify key backbone organizations that will sustain ongoing collaboration. In depth information on collective impact initiatives around the nation and descriptions of effective practices for bringing multi-sector partnerships together around common goals, metrics, and strategies can be found at <http://collectiveimpactforum.org>. Such efforts have provided clear evidence that aligning multiple regional efforts around this shared framework dramatically improves outcomes: in this case better connections between college completion and workforce development.

Eligibility Information

Communities may be in varying stages in their planning for the future of their workforce. However, all applicants must include a new or existing partnership team that includes membership from economic development, workforce development, and education entities. The lead applicant must be from one of these three areas and the other two, along with other key community stakeholders, must be represented on the partnership team.

Communities must represent organic regional collaboration. Predefined workforce investment regions, federally defined MSAs, or economic development regions may be used to define the region, but they are not required. Applicants will be asked to define their region as well as identify key regional partners and stakeholders.

Evaluation Criteria

Through a competitive grant process, communities will be evaluated on the following:

Stakeholder Engagement - Communities will identify a leadership team comprised of representatives from economic development, workforce development, and education and then explain how these entities work together to help drive economic opportunity and postsecondary attainment within their region.



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Regional Connections - What structures exist within the community that allows it to act as one region?

Existing Economic Development and Workforce/Education Activities - Has the community identified target economic development industry sectors? What is the level of integration between the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and other region strategies for education, workforce and economic development?

Capacity to Sustain - Communities will be asked to identify what resources, organizations, and/or processes have the capacity and commitment to implement strategic recommendations and sustain the work of workforce and economic development alignment.

Application, Submission Information and Timeline

Application instructions are at the end of this announcement. They also may be found at <http://www.cael.org> and www.ibhe.org.

Completed applications must be submitted by email to James Reddish, jreddish@cael.org by 5:00 pm CDT on Friday, July 8, 2016.

Selected communities will be notified by Friday, July 22, 2016.

Leadership teams will be expected to attend a kickoff meeting on Friday, August 5, 2016 in Springfield.

An informational webinar for interested communities will be held on Tuesday, June 28, 2016 at 1:30 p.m. CDT. Please email jreddish@cael.org to register.

The following staff members are available for assistance with the Future of the Illinois Workforce Technical Assistance application and processes:

CAEL

James Reddish
Associate Director
Workforce and Economic Development
312-499-2603
jreddish@cael.org

IBHE

Jody Hunt
Grants Administrator
Illinois Board of Higher Education
217-557-7374
hunt@ibhe.org



Application

General Information

Name	Title
Organization Name	Organization Website
Email	Phone Number

Stakeholder Engagement

Communities shall identify a leadership team comprised of representatives from economic development, workforce development, and education and explain how those entities work together to help drive economic opportunity and postsecondary attainment within their region.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Economic Development (Chamber, EDO or Public Sector ED Office) Contact Info, Etc.

Name	Title
Organization Name	Organization Website
Email	Phone Number

Workforce Development (Workforce Investment Board or Public Sector Workforce Office) Contact Info, Etc.

Name	Title
Organization Name	Organization Website
Email	Phone Number



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Education (Public School System, Community College or Local University) Contact Info, Etc.

Name

Title

Organization Name

Organization Website

Email

Phone Number

Others (non-profits, philanthropy, policy leaders/organizations)

1. Organization Name

Organization Website

2. Organization Name

Organization Website

3. Organization Name

Organization Website

Questions

1. How do these organizations typically partner on education, workforce and economic development alignment? (400 characters max)



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Regional Connectivity

-
2. Please define your geographic region in terms of counties and/or municipalities. (400 characters max)
3. What is the largest city or town within your region based on population?
4. Please provide some examples of initiatives, organizations or projects in which education, workforce and economic development stakeholders have worked regionally to address community needs. (400 characters max)



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5. YES NO Has your community ever utilized a collective impact model of collaboration? (<http://collectiveimpactforum.org/>) If so, please describe. (400 characters max)

Existing Economic Development and Workforce/Education Activities

6. YES NO Has your region identified target industry sectors? If so, please list them. (400 characters max)



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7. Please identify the single sector you would like this technical assistance to focus on and explain the reasoning. (400 characters max)

8. What is your community's largest workforce development issue or challenge within this target sector? (400 characters max)



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9. How do you envision this technical assistance complimenting or augmenting your Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and/or Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), etc. regional plans? (400 characters max)

Capacity to Sustain

10. How do you envision implementing recommendations and sustaining collective impact work that comes out of this technical assistance? (400 characters max)



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