Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Project Name: Illinois Pathways Initiative: Moving Regional Sector Partnerships to Scale in Manufacturing

Mission:
The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), the Illinois Department of Economic Security (IDES), and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) will work together to scale up and sustain six to eight regional sector partnerships to address skilled worker shortages in manufacturing. This project will yield evaluation findings that will help guide federal and state sector initiatives seeking to scale up and sustain regional sector partnerships. It will also measure and relate net impact estimates of the benefits to employers.

Initiative Goals:
- Establish and strengthen statewide public-private regional partnerships within the manufacturing industry sector to ensure employment and training services are developed to reflect current and future skill needs.
- Support system reforms and innovations that facilitate cooperation across programs and funding streams by designing state agency policies to ensure their full integration and braiding into adult education, career and technical education and workforce funding streams and programs.
- Build knowledge about effective practices by supplementing traditional workforce investment performance measures with new types of data critical in managing the performance of regional partnerships.

Approach:
DCEO, IDES, and ICCB will implement innovative policies and systems to scale up regional-based models to address the growing skilled workforce shortages in manufacturing. Key components of the scaled-up model are sector-based Career Pathways and Bridge programs as well as flexible and integrated delivery systems and support services to meet employer needs and expand opportunities for the most vulnerable populations such as low-income adults and long-term unemployed workers. This collaborative interagency effort will also build on a number of statewide initiatives to engage industry associations, employers, unions, and economic development, education and workforce partners to continue building effective career pathways for workers that meet employer needs by filling critical skilled jobs throughout the state.

The state agency partners will focus on four major strategies for supporting regional partnerships:

Location:
Springfield, IL

Grant Award Amount:
$11,999,985

Areas Served:
State of Illinois

Innovation Focus Area:
- Systems Reform
- Cross-Program Cooperation
- Industry-Sector Partnerships

Target Population Served:
- Long-Term Unemployed
- Low Income Adults
- Dislocated Workers

Target Industries Engaged:
Manufacturing

Partners:

Evaluation Type:
Quasi-Experimental Design

People Served:
Regional partnerships will enroll, assess, and train
1) Using the Manufacturing Learning Exchange to engage partners and provide technical assistance and ongoing support.
2) Implementing state policies and providing guidance on how to braid public and private funding.
3) Enhancing state labor market and management information systems to support partnerships and their integrated public-private delivery systems.
4) Expanding and integrating performance management and evaluation systems that can support continuous improvement and also provide assurance to state and regional stakeholders that these partnerships are providing a return on investment.

These four strategies will scale up six to eight regional manufacturing partnerships that face the largest shortages and have the strongest commitments from public and private partners to implement and evaluate the regional partnership model in reducing these critical shortages. These partnerships will be asked to:

1) Reduce the time needed to fill critical job openings with qualified workers.
2) Improve worker access to employment and earnings opportunities in these critical jobs, especially low-skilled workers.

The project will seek to achieve high levels of performance for both employers and workers across all regions throughout the state. The project will also result in evaluation findings that will provide critical guidance to federal and state initiatives in scaling and sustaining regional sector partnerships as cornerstones of the public workforce investment system, and inform future legislative initiatives.

Stay Connected:
If you are interested in learning more about this grant and following its progress then visit https://innovation.workforce3one.org/.

Web Link to Full Proposal:

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750 to 800 workers to enter career pathway employment in their regions