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***Understanding Bridge Transition
Programs and Policy Change in Illinois***

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Presentation Overview

- Shifting Gears -Background
- Illinois Skills Gap
- Importance of Partnerships
- Illinois Shifting Gears Policies
- Next Steps
- Questions

What is Shifting Gears?

Joyce Foundation supported project in five Midwestern states (IL, IN, MN, OH & WI) to:

- prepare low-skilled adults by bundling academic, career development and student support along an experience-based path to employment
- provide opportunity for low-skilled, low-wage workers to train for increasingly higher-skill jobs and careers, and
- create better educated and skilled workers who will fuel Illinois' economic recovery and competitiveness.



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- To aid in economic recovery and increase long-term competitiveness of the state, Illinois urgently needs low-skilled workers to obtain degrees and credentials for higher-wage and higher-skilled jobs.
- Bridge programs have the capability to help low-skilled adults gain skills and access education for middle-skill jobs.

Illinois Skills Gap Statistics

- The relationship between the number of “entry age” workers (18-24 years old) and the number of “exit age” workers (65+) is projected to remain relatively constant through 2015.
- More than 1.8 million adults in Illinois have less than twelve grades of Education
- 639,000 immigrants currently reside in Illinois
- 2.53 million residents in Illinois speak a language other than English as the primary language in their homes.
- 22% of those in Adult Education with a goal of postsecondary education and training actually transition
- 56.2 percent of Illinoisans age 25+ have at least some postsecondary education.
- 36.1 percent have an Associate or higher degree.

SOURCES: US Census Bureau and US Census, Index of Need Data(2006, 2009), Illinois Comptroller (2007), Northern Illinois University P-20 Task Force (2006).





Illinois Shifting Gears Partnerships

- Working Group
- State Stakeholder Group
- Subcommittee Groups
- Senior Leadership Team



Policy One

Statewide Bridge Definition

Illinois has adopted a bridge definition that applies across diverse providers.



Bridge Programs

“Bridge programs prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in credit-bearing postsecondary education and training leading to career-path employment in high-demand, middle- and high-skilled occupations.”



Three Core Elements

1. Contextualized Instruction
2. Career Development and Exploration
3. Transitions and Supports

Eligibility for Bridge Programs

- Adults 16 years and older
- Reading and math levels at or above the 6th grade level equivalency through pre-college level *or*
- English language proficiency at or above the low-intermediate ESL level
- May or may not have a high school credential
- May or may not be an incumbent worker



Two Target Populations

- **Developmental Education**
- **Adult Education**



Policy Two

Program Classification and Approval

Establish a system in which Community College and Adult Education programs can offer Bridge Programs.



Policy Three Adult Education Funding Clarification

Understanding how existing adult education funding can be used to develop and implement bridge programs.



Policy Four Support Services

Expansion of the availability of existing resources for support services and the exploration of how multiple sources may be leveraged to meet the needs of bridge participants.



Policy Five

WIA-Title I Training Policy

Illinois has adopted a 40% training policy to foster increased investment in bridge programs.



Policy Six

Measurement and Data

Develop the capacity to measure the transition of lower-skilled students into post-secondary education and employment, and to incorporate them into the larger career pathway schema.

Bridge Program Pilot Summary

Table 16. Student Characteristics

Student Characteristics	All Pilots	Developmental Education	Adult Education
Percent female	60.5%	48.8%	62.5%
Percent minority	81.3%	53.5%	86.1%
Percent less than 25 years old	40.6%	32.6%	42.1%
Percent with no HS diploma or GED	74.2%	12.5%	85.6%
Percent with any postsecondary credits	12.1%	42.5%	6.5%
Percent w/ annual income less than \$3000	30.8%	0.0%	36.8%
Percent w/ annual income \$21,000 or higher	43.4%	88.5%	34.6%
Percent w/ limited English language proficiency	40.5%	9.3%	45.8%

Source: Summary tables produced by the Illinois Community College Board from student-level data submitted by the pilot colleges for January 1 – December 31, 2008. Percents exclude non-reported totals unless otherwise indicated. Reflects corrected summary values from pilot review of initial data runs.



Bridge Pilot Summary

Table 18. Postsecondary Transitions and Employment

Postsecondary Transitions and Employment	All Pilots	Developmental Education	Adult Education
Percent entering postsecondary credit instruction as a result of the program (of all students)	16.7%	30.2%	14.3%
Percent of postsecondary students entering remedial instruction	36.7%	23.1%	41.7%
Percent entering employment (placements)	9.3%	9.3%	9.2%
Percent continuing employment	56.5%	65.1%	50.8%

Source: Summary tables produced by the Illinois Community College Board from student-level data submitted by the pilot colleges for January 1 – December 31, 2008. Percents exclude non-reported totals unless otherwise indicated. Reflects corrected summary values from pilot review of initial data runs.

Transition Measure Development

- *Incorporate a career cluster dimension to the transition measures.*
- *Apply existing transition measures separately to Adult Education and Developmental Education students to track their progress into and through postsecondary instruction to employment.*
- *Improve on the measurement of progress **within** postsecondary education.*
- *Add an earnings measure.*

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- **Next Steps**

- Engagement of state decision makers in developing and implementing bridge-related policies
- Development and embed of bridge program models and practices
- Strengthening data systems and expanding performance measures and tracking
- Communicating practices and policies to decision makers and the public
- State, Regional, and Local Technical Assistance



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- Questions
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