

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)



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)

FAQ

1. What is the Future of the Illinois Workforce Technical Assistance?

USA Funds has provided funding for a pilot program in Illinois for four regional areas or communities to receive technical assistance, using a collective impact model to actively work to align workforce development and education with economic growth and future demand. This technical assistance is provided by experts at the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE).

2. Who should apply for Future of the Illinois Workforce Technical Assistance?

Lead applicants must represent one of the three key leadership organizations within the community: economic development, workforce development or education. In addition to the lead organization, applicants must identify and secure support from the other two leadership team organizations as well as other key community stakeholders.

3. What communities are eligible for Future of the Illinois Workforce Technical Assistance?

Communities must represent an 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. While some of the geography must be in Illinois, regions that span state lines will be considered.

4. What criteria will be used to evaluate community applications?

Communities will be evaluated on four key areas: Stakeholder Engagement, Regional Connectivity, Existing Economic Development and Workforce/Education Activities and Capacity to Sustain. Strong applicants will demonstrate key stakeholder buy-in and the potential for sustainable change through collective impact planning.

5. Will communities receive funding directly?

No, funding has been provided to CAEL and IBHE to cover the technical assistance at no cost to the communities. Limited funds for reimbursement for leadership team travel and meeting expenses may be available.

6. How does this align with the Higher Education Commission on the Future of the Workforce?

The IBHE convened Illinois state educational and economic development agencies to assemble the staff, expertise, data, and research needed to assist the Commission to examine and develop data, effective practices, and policy recommendations to increase postsecondary education attainment and address regional workforce needs. Commission recommendations will help shape the collective impact process and provide guidance for recommendations and programming as part of the technical assistance provided to the regions.

7. What is the timeline for Future of the Illinois Workforce Technical Assistance?

Monday, June 13, 2016	Application is Open
Tuesday, June 28, 2016	Technical webinar for applicant
Friday, July 8, 2016	Applications due to jreddish@cael.org
Friday, July 22, 2016	Notification of awards
Friday, August 5, 2016	Launch and kickoff meeting

8. What is included in the technical assistance and who will deliver it?

Communities will receive 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.

Technical assistance to facilitate alignment between industry demand and education and training supply will be provided by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE).

The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (www.cael.org) is a national non-profit leader in the field of workforce and economic development, providing consulting, research, tools, and strategies needed to create effective talent development solutions. In the last five years alone, CAEL has supported various workforce skill needs and sector specific initiatives in more than 150 communities in 43 states. CAEL brings significant experience working with workforce and economic development practitioners, on-the-ground ability to facilitate employer engagement, analysis of labor market and target sector information, and a national perspective on best practices to align talent development with regional economic clusters. In addition to workforce and economic development, CAEL has built a national reputation as the thought leader in the field of adult education, putting meaningful learning, credentials and work within reach for all.

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (www.ibhe.org) is responsible for statewide higher education planning and coordination, academic program approvals, budget recommendations, maintaining higher education data systems, administration of various grant programs, and implementation of legislation directing IBHE to conduct studies or programs.

Through its master planning responsibility, the Board approved the *Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success* in December 2008 as the blueprint for higher education over the next decade. The *Public Agenda* focuses on four goals:

Goal 1: Increase educational attainment to match the best-performing states and world countries.

Goal 2: Ensure college affordability for students, families, and taxpayers.

Goal 3: Increase production of high-quality postsecondary credentials to meet the demands of the economy and an increasingly global society.

Goal 4: Better integrate Illinois' educational, research, and innovation assets to meet the economic needs of the state and its regions.

Goal 3, in particular, directs the state to expand to 60% the number of Illinois citizens with a postsecondary degree or credential. The Illinois General Assembly directed IBHE to establish a Commission on the Future of the Workforce to identify the data, best practices, and policies to assist regions of the State to connect the needs of the workforce with the college and postsecondary education programs to ensure educated individuals are able to meet economic needs. (HJR 52)

USA Funds® is a nonprofit corporation that has worked since 1960 to enhance preparation for, access to and success in postsecondary education. USA Funds has served more than 22 million students and parents with more than \$250 billion in financial aid for higher education. It has also provided support for thousands of education and financial institutions nationwide. Today USA Funds (www.usafunds.org) has adopted Completion With a PurposeSM as its guiding principle. While aiming to increase the percentage of students who finish what they start in college or other postsecondary programs, Completion With a Purpose has the additional critical goal of ensuring a smoother transition from education to employment in the 21st Century global workforce. USA Funds promotes Completion With a Purpose through strategic philanthropy, investing in innovative solutions, and promoting informed conversations about the following areas: measuring the value of college; engaging employers; promoting innovative approaches to college and career preparation; and streamlining key education transitions.

9. If my community already has a strategy for alignment of workforce development, does that disqualify me?

Absolutely not. It is expected that each community brings its own experience to the table; technical assistance is designed to meet a community wherever they are in the alignment process and move their regional strategy forward. If the community has already undertaken some or all components of the technical assistance offered, CAEL and IBHE may work with them to develop and deliver a technical assistance package that meets these more mature needs.

10. What is expected of the participating community partners?

Selected community leadership teams will work with technical assistance providers to identify a work plan, unique to each community. Leadership partners will be expected to help connect technical assistance to appropriate regional stakeholders and assist in pulling together community collective impact convenings. In addition, the leadership team from each community is expected to attend statewide meetings for all four regions at the beginning of the process and then again at the end. The first convening will be on August 5, 2016 in Springfield. Participating communities will be expected to share their experiences as



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appropriate with other communities, including those selected and others, via case study, potential webinar presentations, conferences and other venues.

Additional Questions? Please reach out to James Reddish, Associate Director Workforce and Economic Development, CAEL at 312.499.2603 or jreddish@cael.org.