CENTRAL ILLINOIS

WORKFORCE ISSUES 1997

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DIVERSITY

EDUCATION

WELFARE TO WORK

JOB MATCH

CAREERS

LIVING WAGE

SKILLS UPGRADES

Produced by the Applied Social Research Unit, Illinois State University

CENTRAL ILLINOIS

WORKFORCE ISSUES 1997

Produced for
The Central Illinois Private Industry Council

by

The Applied Social Research Unit
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Central Illinois Workforce Issues, 1997

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Prepared by
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the summer and autumn of 1997, the Applied Social Research Unit (ASRU) of Illinois State University conducted research from a holistic perspective to support planning and coordination of an integrated workforce development and support system within a Central Illinois area including the City of Peoria and Peoria, Marshall, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties (hereafter referred to as the *study area*). The purpose of this research was to answer the following questions:

1) What are the local long- and short-term workforce development and support needs of employers and residents of the study area?
2) What services and resources are currently being used to address those needs?
3) How can local resources be better used to meet current and future workforce needs?

Quantitative and qualitative research activities conducted to answer these questions included:
- a review of public data regarding current and projected labor force needs in the study area;
- a telephone survey of 100 area employers regarding current and projected skills, training, and workforce support needs;
- conduct of 14 focus groups composed of stakeholders in the area's workforce development process;
- a survey of area organizations administering workforce development and support programs; and
- a review of nationwide information on best practices for design and implementation of integrated workforce development and support systems.

The primary conclusion emerging from this research is that the future success and prosperity of the study area requires that every current and potential worker perform at the highest possible skill level. This means that workforce development is everyone's job—not just that of school and college teachers. Parents must learn about educational and career options and encourage their children to participate and excel. Civic and religious organizations must work with employers, schools, and social agencies to support the training and employment of area residents. Employers and trade unions must jettison their traditionally adversarial relationship to meet their common goals of producing skilled workers for long-term good employment. Above all, both young people and adults must come to see learning and career development as life-long opportunities and responsibilities.

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All partners in the workforce development and support process must evaluate and revamp the way they do things. Educational curricula and assessment standards must be overhauled to integrate theoretical and work skills-based knowledge and employers must be involved in composing and delivering instruction. Teachers at all grade levels must be trained to include careers and job-skills information in all types of classroom activities. The barrier between school and workplace must be dissolved so that young people have broad understanding of available careers, feel welcome in workplaces, and have a variety of work experience before they enter the workforce.

Resources and facilities for training and employment support must be easily accessible to area adults. All efforts must be made to create flexible and friendly learning opportunities that meet the needs of specific populations. Training must be available both within and outside of workplaces to upgrade skills of workers. Furthermore, successful methods must be found to attract adults who are not currently employed into educational and training programs which allow them to qualify for rewarding skilled employment.

Employers must provide clear and reliable information about the specific skills and qualifications necessary to be hired in area occupations. They must use the most efficient ways of advertising job openings and screening potential candidates. They must also work with social agencies to support the transportation, child care, and elder care needs of workers. In addition, they must be prepared to pay workers a living wage and offer a full range of benefits.

Labor unions must be prepared to increase their involvement in education and training. With long-term experience in delivering high quality skills-based instruction, they have a wealth of expertise to offer the planning and implementation efforts necessary to establish a new workforce development and support system. Furthermore, their own programs could be expanded to involve more area young people. Unions must be prepared to work with employers, educators, social service agencies, and other partners to reach common goals.

Workplace development agencies must expand their perspectives and roles beyond traditional needy populations. In meeting the requirements of employers, educational institutions, students, job-seekers, and workers they will both serve their more traditional client base and support community economic development.

The following specific recommendations emerge from project research:

- Workforce development and support system planners should think in terms of a regional "community"—*not* in terms of more narrow municipal, county, or service area interests.
- Planning must address the special and different needs of rural and inner city residents.
- Existing workforce development programs should be formally evaluated. Emerging information should be used to improve or cut programs and enable new initiatives to be designed on the basis of "what works."

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- All possible media—newspapers, television, radio, Internet—should be used to inform the public about area labor force issues and generate support for the development and utilization of the integrated workforce development and support system.
- This report must be used to support the needs of system planners and service providers. The Executive Summary and *Central Illinois Workforce Development Guide* should be widely disseminated.
- Employers, educators, local government officials, public agency staff members, economic developers, and other area leaders who participated in project research should be recruited to undertake specific responsibilities associated with development of a collaborative, integrated workforce development and support system.
- A clearinghouse for workforce development and support services should be established. Making the best possible use of information technologies, this clearinghouse should match customers with services, house and track interagency data, and facilitate communication among all stakeholders in workforce development and support service delivery.
- A single workforce development entity should be established to coordinate the activities of school-to-work, welfare-to-work, and other workforce development initiatives in the study area. This entity should be empowered to make creative and productive use of area resources to support innovative collaborative projects.
- Employers must communicate actual labor force needs to the Department of Employment Security. Current public data underestimate the demand for Information Technology workers.

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2. INTRODUCTION

Dramatic demographic, social, technological, and economic change are altering both the ways Americans do business and the kinds of skills they need to be productive workers and support comfortable lifestyles.[1] Experts agree that these new conditions demand innovative changes in education, training, and workplace organization. They also agree that without redesign of the national, state, regional, and local systems providing workforce development and support services, necessary changes will not occur. According to a recent study,

> In today's increasingly complicated global economy, the need for a highly skilled, productive, and educated workforce takes on ever-greater importance. The key to developing such workers rests on a state's ability to organize its myriad employment, training, and education programs into a system of workforce initiatives that ensure an efficient use of funds; to provide businesses with sustainable competitive advantages; and to offer workers the chance for lifelong learning opportunities.[2]

The creation of an integrated workforce development and support system must foster the transition of young people from school to employment and welfare recipients from dependence to independence. It must also meet the training, support, and job placement needs of out-of-school, out-of-work youth; individuals with disabilities; and adults needing to develop or upgrade work skills. Finally, it must engage the attention, involvement, and investment of all stakeholders in the workforce development process—employers, educators, elected officials, economic development professionals, social agency staff members, parents, students, and community residents.

There is no shortage of workforce development and support programs. Education at elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels is the largest single item in state budgets.[3] In addition, there are 125 federal employment and training programs regulated by six agencies, but mainly administered by states. States have also created many programs to address the needs of specific populations or labor markets.[4] These programs operate more or less independently, governed by specific eligibility requirements, service area limitations, data maintenance and reporting guidelines, and funding allocations.

While in many places there has been an attempt to coordinate or integrate the administration and services of some programs—particularly in the form of One-Stop Career Centers—generally speaking, it is euphemistic to refer to the plethora of educational and training

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[1] See, e.g., National Commission on Excellence in Education, <u>A Nation at Risk</u>, Washington, D.C. (1983); William B. Johnston and Harold H. Packer, <u>Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century</u>, Indianapolis: Hudson Institute (1987); Richard W. Judy and Carol D'Amico, <u>Workforce 2020: Work and Workers in the 21st Century</u>, Indianapolis: Hudson Institute (1997).

[2] Karin McCarthy and Rebekah Lashman, <u>Workforce Development: Building Statewide Systems</u>, Investing in People Project, A joint project of National Conference of State Legislatures and Jobs for the Future, Issue Paper No. 2 (May 1994), p. v.

[3] Jana Zinser, <u>Reinventing Education,</u> Investing in People Project, A joint project of National Conference of State Legislatures and Jobs for the Future, Issue Paper No. 1 (February 1994), p. 3.

[4] McCarthy and Lashman, <u>op.cit.</u>, p. 4.

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programs as a workforce development and support "system." The term implies deliberate design of structure and coordination of functions that are notably lacking in American education, training, and employment support provision. Because of the inefficiency and waste caused by this lack of coordination, there is general agreement that redesign and rationalization of workforce development and support services will result in positive outcomes for skills, employment, and prosperity.

Central Illinois is experiencing the same challenges as the nation as a whole. At a time of declining unemployment, area employers report shortages of both highly skilled job applicants and workers ready and willing to take entry-level low-paid jobs. At the same time, employers identify many skills deficiencies among both job applicants and current workers.[5] Furthermore, social service agencies and employers face the daunting task of training and finding employment for welfare recipients. While many organizations are involved in addressing these challenges, their efforts are largely uncoordinated.

In spring, 1997, the Central Illinois Private Industry Council commissioned the Applied Social Research Unit (ASRU) of Illinois State University to conduct research from a holistic perspective to support planning and coordination of an integrated workforce development and support system within its service delivery area (Illinois SDA 15, City of Peoria and Peoria, Marshall, Stark, and Woodford Counties). Tazewell County was also included in research activities because its large citizen base significantly contributes to the labor force in Central Illinois. Hereafter, these five counties are referred to as the *study area*. The purpose of this research was to answer the following questions:

1) What are the local long- and short-term workforce development and support needs of employers and residents of the study area?
2) What services and resources are currently being used to address those needs?
3) How can local resources be better used to meet current and future workforce needs?

Quantitative and qualitative research activities conducted to answer these questions included:
- a review of public data regarding current and projected labor force needs in the study area;
- a telephone survey of 100 area employers regarding current and projected skills, training, and workforce support needs;
- conduct of 14 focus groups composed of stakeholders in the area's workforce development process;
- a survey of all area organizations administering workforce development and support programs; and
- a review of nationwide information on best practices for design and implementation of integrated workforce development and support systems.

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[5] Results of a survey of Central Illinois employers regarding skills deficiencies appear in <u>Central Illinois Workforce Issues</u>, Applied Social Research Unit/Community Research Services, Illinois State University (1995).

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The methodologies used to complete these activities are described in section 3 of this report. Research results are presented in section 4, and conclusions and recommendations for future action appear in section 5. Graphs and tables displaying detailed data emerging from project research are presented in Appendices 1 and 2; materials associated with surveys of employers and workforce development support organizations are included in Appendices 3 and 5. Appendix 4 provides detailed reports of focus group discussions and information about participants. The *Central Illinois Workforce Development Resource Guide* appears as Appendix 6.

Products based on project research include:
- this **Project Report** which provides details of information collected in the course of research activities, identifies key strategic issues for workforce development and support in the study area, and makes recommendations for future actions;
- the **Executive Summary** which summarizes key research findings in a form suitable for distribution to a wide general audience;
- transparencies and notes to support a 45-minute **Presentation**; and
- the *Central Illinois Workforce Development Resource Guide* which facilitates collaboration among providers and integration of workforce development and support services.

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3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For this project, the Applied Social Research Unit utilized a mixed research approach incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to obtain balanced information about the multifaceted issues associated with workforce development and support in the study area. *Review of public data* made possible a description of demographic, educational, industrial, and employment trends in the study area. The *telephone survey of area employers* elicited quantifiable data about growth occupations, skills needs, and training requirements and resources. *Focus group discussions* provided a wealth of qualitative information about both current barriers to service integration and ideal components for a local workforce development and support system. The *survey of organizations providing workforce development and support services* enabled description of service coverage and resource allocation in the study area. In addition, it supported construction of the **Central Illinois Workforce Development Resource Guide**. The methodologies employed for each research activity are discussed below. Information resulting from research is discussed in section 4 of this report. Tables and graphs appear in Appendices 1 and 2.

3.1 Review of Public Data

To contextualize information elicited by project research activities, the most recent available data about study area population, educational attainment, growth occupations, and wages were obtained from the following sources:

- US Census of Population and Housing, 1980-1990;
- US Bureau of the Census, *USA Counties* 1996;
- 1997 State of Illinois, *Illinois Population Trends 1990 to 2020;*
- *1990 Census Transportation Planning Package* (CTPP);
- *1994 County and City Data Book*;
- Illinois Department of Employment Security's *Occupational Projections, 1992-2005* and *1996 Employer Wage Survey*
- Illinois Occupational Information Coordinating Committee's *Illinois Occupational Information System* which includes data compiled from the Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Board of Higher Education, and the US Department of Defense;
- US Bureau of the Census, *County Business Patterns* 1993-1994; and
- Illinois Department of Human Services.

A demographic and economic profile of the study area appears in section 4 of this report. Many of the graphs and tables appearing in Appendices 1 and 2 are based on public data. Additional detailed demographic, economic, occupation, and industry data for study area communities and counties can be found in the *Central Illinois Workforce Issues* (1995) report produced by the Applied Social Research Unit.

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3.2 Employer Survey

The goal of the employer survey was obtain information about good jobs—jobs that are in demand and pay well. This information can be used to counsel students and job-seekers, develop skills-based educational and training programs, and recruit prospective employees. It can also be used to plan collaboration among employers, educators, and social agency personnel.

Applied Social Research Unit staff members conducted one hundred interviews with employers in the five-county study area. Interviewees were asked a series of questions about high paying growth occupations in their organizations, occupations most often filled, and occupations that will be most in demand in the future. Regarding each type of occupation, interviewers sought information about skills needs, training programs, and the employer's willingness to participate in workforce development activities. Results of the survey are discussed in section 4 of this report. Graphs and tables based on survey data appear in Appendices 1 and 2. Appendix 3 contains the survey instrument and related materials.

3.2.1 Sample Development

Employers were selected for interviews based on four factors: identification of growth occupations, wages of growth occupations, the number of people employed in growth occupations, and the industries employing people in the growth occupations. The following steps were used in devising the sampling strategy:

Step 1. Occupations growing at least .5% annually as calculated by the Illinois Department of Employment Security 1992-2005 Occupation Projections for Illinois Central Community College counties (Peoria, Tazewell, Woodford, and Marshall Counties) were identified as growth occupations.

Step 2. Local wage data from the Peoria Metropolitan Statistical Area (1996 Illinois Department of Employment Security Wage Survey) were applied to the occupations identified in Step 1.

Step 3. The 25 highest-paying growth occupations resulting from Steps 1 and 2 were selected for the survey. Resulting occupations:

  mechanical engineers
  marketing, advertising, and public relations managers
  accountants and auditors
  production supervisors
  computer systems analysts
  general managers and top executives
  supervisors of marketing and sales
  maintenance repairers
  stock clerks
  financial managers
  sales representatives, excluding retail
  registered nurses

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food service and lodging managers
supervisors of clerical workers
automotive mechanics
social workers
sales route drivers
freight/stock material movers
helpers/laborers
licensed practical nurses
secretaries
elementary school teachers
secondary school teachers
heavy truck drivers
office clerks

Step 4. Industries employing persons working within the 25 occupations selected in Step 3 were identified using Illinois Occupational Information System Matrix Report frequency distributions. These distributions provide a percentage of occupations employed by selected industrial sector.

Step 5. Each of the 25 occupations selected in Step 3 was assigned to the industry employing the greatest percentage of persons within each occupation.

Step 6. Final industries and occupations to be sampled for employer interviews were selected so as to represent the largest number of industries with as little duplication of industries as possible. Each of the following occupations were selected to represent one or more industries as a "sampled occupation":
registered nurses
teachers
mechanical engineers
food service and lodging managers
computer systems analysts
sales representatives, except retail
social workers, except medical and psychological
stock clerks
sales supervisors and managers
automotive mechanics
maintenance repairers
production supervisors
helpers, laborers, and material movers
drivers/sales workers
clerical supervisors and managers

Step 7. The number of interviews by industry (and the industry's selected occupation) and by each county within the study area was determined. The proportion of interviews by industry and by county was based on the total number of interviews to be conducted (200) and the percentage

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of annual openings within industries employing the occupations selected in Step 6. See Appendix 3 for a copy of the employer survey sample size by industry, occupation, and county.

Step 8. Employers were proportionally selected from Dun and Bradstreet 1995 *Marketplace* records by industry and county. The resulting sample of 210 employers represent industries employing the highest-paid growth occupations in Peoria, Tazewell, Woodford, Marshall, and Stark Counties. (The sample included 210 rather than 200 employers due to rounding.)

Step 9. The sampling strategy, although representative, resulted in a small number of businesses from Stark, Marshall, and Woodford Counties. To ensure inclusion of their perspectives, 30 large employers (employing more than 100 people) from these Counties were added to the sample. Two additional employers were added to the sample based on interest representatives of these organizations expressed in focus groups.

Step 10. The Central Illinois Private Industry County and employers appearing more than once during sampling were removed from the sample leaving a total of 234 employers to be interviewed. (See Figure 18, Appendix 1.)

3.2.2 Employer Survey Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire used for employer telephone interviews addressed the following:

- the number of current and estimated future employees working in the sampled occupation identified in sample development;
- the job for which employers most often hire;
- the job employers have the most difficult time filling;
- the skills, knowledge, and abilities employers look for in applicants for each job (i.e., sampled, most often hired, and most difficult to fill);
- the educational and training requirements for each job;
- training provided to employees hired for each job;
- expected changes in the skills or educational requirements for each job and for other jobs within the organization;
- expected growth in future hiring;
- the organization's recruiting methods;
- the organization's interest in working with other organizations on community-based workforce development projects

Applied Social Research Unit staff and Central Illinois Private Industry Council staff reviewed and edited the questionnaire for content and format as necessary. A copy of the interview questionnaire appears in Appendix 3 of this report.

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3.2.3 Survey Administration and Response

An introductory letter explaining the project and inviting participation was sent to employers selected in Step 8 of the sampling strategy (see Appendix 3). Employers added to the sample in Step 9 were not sent this letter.

Interviewers made at least three attempts to reach the appropriate interviewee. The response rate for the employer survey was 42.7 percent. The following table indicates the number of calls made and the number of interviews conducted.

Calling Results	Number of Calls
Not available	80
Not interested	31
Bad telephone number	14
Thought could not provide useful information	9
Total non-response	**134**
Completed interviews	**100**
Total interviews attempted	**234**

Fifty-two industries were represented in employer interviews. Industries represented by five or more employer interviews include: eating places; state commercial banks; medical offices and clinics; nursing and personal care facilities; and elementary and secondary schools. Small, medium, and large organizations were represented in each County as the following table indicates.

Number of Employees	County					Total Interviews: Number of Employees
	Marshall	*Peoria	Stark	Tazewell	Woodford	
1 to 9	0	14	0	3	3	20
10 to 24	1	11	1	3	3	19
25 to 49	0	10	0	7	0	17
50 to 99	1	4	0	3	3	11
100 to 249	4	10	1	1	5	21
250 to 499	1	4	1	0	2	8
500 to 999	0	1	0	0	0	1
1000+	0	1	0	1	0	2
unspecified	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total Interviews: County	7	56	3	18	16	**100 (each frequency is also the percent)**

*Fifty percent of the 56 interviews conducted in Peoria County were with employers in the City of Peoria.

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Figure 19 in Appendix 1 indicates the number of employer interviews conducted by occupation and type of occupation (i.e., sampled occupation, most often hired occupation, and most difficult to fill occupation).

3.2.4 Employer Survey Data Analysis

Sampled occupations and occupations employers identified as high-demand occupations were coded numerically for data entry and analysis. A taxonomy of skills, occupations, and educational experience was used to code answers to survey questions. See Figures 19 and 22 to 24 in Appendix 1 for copies of both coding schemes.

Frequency distributions, crosstabulations, and percents were calculated using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 7.0. Graphs and tables were produced using Microsoft EXCEL to illustrate overall survey results.

Appendix 1 includes figures representing overall survey results. Appendix 2 includes detailed survey and other information for specific occupations. Occupational detail is provided for the following:
- all occupations sampled for the employer survey;
- the occupation of office clerk which was identified by employers as having at least 100 openings over the next five years; and
- occupations where supply (indicated by number of graduates) is less than demand (projected annual demand).

Appendix 1 also includes information about how organizations are currently supporting workforce development activities and how organizations would be willing to support or further support these activities (see Figures 33 and 34). Appendix 3 includes a list of those organizations interested in supporting workforce development activities.

3.3 Focus Groups

The goal of focus group discussions was to collect qualitative information from stakeholders in the workforce development and support system about the ways the system currently operates and features that would characterize an ideal system for the study area. In August and September 1997, Applied Social Research Unit staff members conducted 14 focus groups involving a total of 81 participants.

3.3.1 Focus Group Composition

Focus groups were composed of area employers, educators, labor union representatives, local elected officials, economic developers, social service professionals, workforce support agency clients, and adult basic education students. Contact information for prospective focus group participants was supplied by the Central Illinois Private Industry Council (CIPIC) and augmented through networking by ASRU staff members.

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People were informed about the project and invited to participate in a focus group through a letter from the Mayor of Peoria, the Central Illinois Private Industry Council, or the Applied Social Research Unit. An ASRU staff member followed these letters with a phone call to invite persons to participate on a specific date. (Invitations, a complete list of focus group participants, and recommendations of participants for a Workforce Board appear in Appendix 4 of this report.)

The following table indicates the number of invitations extended, the number of people who accepted invitations, and the number of people who actually attended a focus group.

	Number Invitations Attempted/Extended	Number Confirmed Yes for Specific Focus Group	Number of Focus Group Participants
Education to Careers Conference	N/A	N/A	5
Individuals	139	84	62
Community College Classes	2 Classes	1 Class	14

*TOTAL PARTICIPANTS   =   81**

*One participant who attended a focus group at the Education to Careers Conference also attended the group representing Peoria and Tazewell County businesses. This person was counted twice when determining total participants = 81.

Participants came from the following counties:

County	Number of focus group participants	Percent of total focus group participants
Peoria	38	48%
Tazewell	11	14%
Woodford	8	10%
Marshall	7	9%
Stark	7	9%
Fulton*	5	6%
Represent more than one County	3	4%
Missing information	1	1%

*Fulton County was not included in the study area. The names of the five focus group participants from that county were suggested by CIPIC staff members.

Because of the need to represent the diverse viewpoints among stakeholders, focus groups were composed according to the occupations or roles of participants, their rural or urban perspective (i.e., urban was defined for the purposes of this study as Peoria and Tazewell Counties), and their association with workforce development. Categories used to organize focus groups included Urban Social Service Professionals, Rural Social Service Professionals, Urban Local Elected Officials, Urban Economic Developers, Rural Local Elected Officials, Rural Economic Developers, Urban Business Professionals, Rural Business Professionals, Urban

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Educators, Rural Educators, Illinois Employment and Training Center (IETC) Clients and Job-Seekers, and GED Students.

In some cases, more than one category of participants met together in the same focus group (e.g., Woodford County Local Elected Officials, Economic Developers, and Business Professionals). In other cases, because of scheduling constraints, a member of one occupational category took part in a group representing another category. Participants in the focus groups held at the Education to Careers conference were not selected, but volunteered to take part in these discussions.

Focus group participants represented the following industries.

Industry	Number of focus group participants	Percent of total focus group participants
Construction	1	1%
Manufacturing	8	10%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	4	5%
Other Services	13	16%
Education	36*	45%
Public Administration	11	14%
Represent more than one Industry	4	5%
Not applicable	3	4%

*This number includes 13 GED students in addition to teachers, counselors, and administrators.

Only Peoria County was represented by members of all industry classifications. Educators from all counties participated in focus groups.

County	Industry					
	Construc.	Manufact.	Financial Services	Other Services	Education	Public Adminis.
Peoria	1	2	3	9	16	5
Tazewell				1	8	
Woodford		2			2	3
Marshall		1	1		2	2
Stark		3		1	1	1
Fulton					5	
Represent more than one County				2	1	

3.3.2 Focus Group Administration

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Focus group discussions lasted for between one and two hours. Refreshments were served. A minimum of two ASRU staff members attended each focus group. Discussions were taped. Notes were taken on a lap-top computer. A flip-chart was used to create notes that were visible to participants. Flip-chart pages were taped to the wall as they were completed. Each participant was given a short project description, a table tent upon which to write his or her name, two green self-adhesive "dots," and a focus group participant form to be filled out and turned in before the end of the session.

The techniques used to conduct discussions were selected from focus group and nominal group methodologies. The following program was used for all focus groups:

1. An ASRU staff member welcomed participants to the focus group and introduced the project, indicating how information from the focus group would be integrated with other types of research findings.
2. An ASRU staff member described the process to be followed during the focus group.
3. Focus group participants introduced themselves, indicating their name, their association with workforce development, and, if appropriate, their job title or description, their employer, and the geographical area served by their organization.
4. Each focus group participant in turn was asked to indicate one characteristic or component of an ideal, integrated workforce development and support system. Participants were instructed to conceptualize the system broadly to include education and other preparation of young people for careers, skills upgrades for current workers, and support for adults within special categories (i.e., disabled persons, older adults, homemakers, welfare recipients, displaced workers) to enter or re-enter the workforce.
5. After all participants made at least one contribution to the list of characteristics or components, general discussion was held until participants were satisfied with the list.
6. Participants were instructed to vote for either one or two characteristics or components upon which they wished to focus the rest of the discussion by sticking the two green self-adhesive "dots" beside the selected characteristic or component listed on the flip-chart pages which had been taped to the wall.
7. The rest of the focus group discussion was concerned with the changes necessary to achieve the selected characteristic or component of the ideal, integrated workforce development and support system.
8. During the last few minutes of discussion, participants were asked for any additional comments they wanted to make.

This format worked better with some groups than with others. It was particularly successful with business people and educators; it was less successful with IETC clients, students, and economic developers. Nonetheless, use of the same program and structure for all groups supports comparison of information from participants representing a wide range of roles, experience, and geographical areas.

3.3.3 Analysis of Focus Group Information

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A brief summary of each focus group appears in Appendix 4. Each summary includes the focus group date, time, place, facilitators, and participants. The summaries also include the following information identified by participants:

- Characteristics/components of an ideal, integrated workforce development and support system;
- Topic(s) chosen for further discussion;
- Changes that must occur to achieve the ideal, integrate workforce development and support system for the topic(s) chosen for further discussion; and
- Additional comments (not all groups provided additional comments).

Focus group notes and summaries were reviewed to create the synthesis of information provided by participants which appears in section 4.6 of this report. Their vision of the ideal integrated workforce development and support system for the study area is expressed through the following:

- The *mindset* necessary to create and nurture the ideal system;
- The *educational system* (elementary through postsecondary) that prepares young people for employment;
- The training opportunities, credentialing systems, working conditions, and support services that enable adults to *obtain, retain, and improve employment*;
- The *composition, structure, and administration of the ideal workforce development and support agency*; and
- The *national, state, and local policies and systems* necessary to support the ideal integrated workforce development and support system.

The number of focus group participants who independently expressed ideas within each of the above bulleted points are tabulated within the narrative.

3.4 Resource Guide

The goal of developing the *Central Illinois Workforce Development Resource Guide* is to present an overview of as many as possible of the study area organizations involved in any aspect of workforce development. These organizations include colleges, schools, unions, and social service agencies (public and private). Surveys were sent to 214 organizations to obtain information about programs offered by each organization and their service areas, services provided, target groups, number of participants, and sources and amounts of funds.

The results from the surveys appear in the *Central Illinois Workforce Development Resource Guide* in three sections: first, a matrix giving a brief, one line summary of each program; second, a resource manual giving a more comprehensive description of each organization and its programs; and third, an index of organizations and programs by services and target populations. Results of the survey are discussed in section 4.5 of this report. Graphs based on survey data appear in Appendix 1. The questionnaires and cover letters sent to

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organizations administering workforce development programs and services are included in Appendix 5. The matrix, manual and index appear in Appendix 6.

3.4.1 Survey Development

The first part of each survey asked for basic information about the organization, i.e., name of organization, address, phone number, etc. The second part of the survey varied depending on the type of organization it was being sent to. Agencies and unions were asked to give a brief description of all services they provided, whether or not the service was related to workforce development. Instead of the brief description, colleges and schools were asked about career awareness and development activities. In addition, schools were asked if they received any support from businesses or labor organizations for certain activities, i.e., curriculum development, "Education to Careers," etc.

The third part of the survey asked organizations for general information about each workforce development program they provided. This information included name of program, name of administrator, service area, target group, and services provided. The fourth part asked for more detailed information about the program, including number of participants in the most recent fiscal year, measurable outcomes, sources of funds, dollar amount from each funding source, and time period covered by funds. The union survey did not have the fourth part except for the number of participants which was rolled into its third part.

3.4.2 Contact List Development

The first step in this process was to develop a mailing list for the survey. At the outset, appropriate names were taken from previously published similar directories. The yellow pages of all phone directories covering the study area were searched under appropriate headings. Other names were obtained from Applied Social Research Unit staff members working on other aspects of the project. In addition to the survey, each mailing contained the most recent developed list of names and asked for suggestions of other names that might be added. The names of schools to be included were obtained from the school directory published by the Illinois State Board of Education.

3.4.3 Mailing and Responses

The mailings consisted of a cover letter, a two-page survey, and the current list of names that surveys were being sent to. Mailings were sent out in weekly batches between August 8 and October 13, 1997. If no response was received from an organization within two to three weeks after the survey was mailed, a follow-up call was made to them. Surveys were then remailed or faxed to the organization, or the survey information was taken over the phone. Two follow-up calls were made to each non-responding organization.

Some surveys were returned by the post office as "undeliverable." When this happened, a call was made to the organization to obtain the correct mailing address. In some cases the phone number was no longer in service.

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A few organizations that completed and returned surveys were determined not to be involved in workforce development programs and so their information was not included. See the following table for mailing response rates by organization.

Response rate to surveys					
Organization	Mailed	Completed and used	Completed but not used	Did not respond	Undeliverable
Colleges	24	9 (38%)	0	16	0
Agencies	100	35 (35%)	3	57	5
Schools	37	27 (73%)	0	9	0
Unions	53	9 (17%)	4	30	10
*Totals	214	80 (37%)	7 (3%)	112 (52%)	15 (7%)

*Total percents do not equal100 percent due to rounding

3.4.4 Coding

When the surveys were returned, the information was entered into a Microsoft Access database. Information was entered as written on the survey. In addition, organizations, populations targeted, and services provided were entered as coded data. Targeted populations were coded into 10 categories and 32 sub-categories. Services provided were coded into 9 categories and 46 sub-categories. (See coding sheet in Appendix 5.) The list of categories and sub-categories for the targeted populations and the services provided were developed from the survey responses themselves and from other similar reports.

Organizations were categorized as agencies, schools, colleges and unions. Agencies include organizations that actually direct workforce development programs and/or administer public funds granted to other organizations that direct the programs. Agencies include both governmental and private organizations. School districts are classified as agencies because they develop and direct programs. Schools were defined as a building where students came to meet in classrooms on a school year basis.

The service areas of schools were coded in the geographical category of "other" because in reality they do not serve a county but rather a school district, the boundaries and populations of which are not necessarily the same as the county or counties in which its residents live. The geographical service areas of schools were also coded as serving the county in which they are located according to Illinois State Board of Education classification.

Schools were asked to list all career awareness and development activities. While these activities did not individually constitute a "program" it was decided to list all such activities of a school into a program called "Career" so the information would appear in the results. For the "Career" program, unless otherwise stated in the survey, the number of participants was entered into the database as "varies" and the source of funds was entered as "portion of budget."

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Some organizations administer only one program that deals with workforce development issues, while other organizations manage several programs. In the matrix, each program is listed as a separate entity. In the resource manual, each organization is treated as a separate entity with each of its programs described.

There were several organizations that provide one or more programs for which the service area was defined as the City of Peoria. They were coded both for City of Peoria and for Peoria County. Measurable outcome(s) were not entered into the database because the respondents interpreted the question so differently that a meaningful analysis could not be done. If the dollar amounts from each funding source were for more than one year, the amount entered in the database was adjusted to reflect what was available for one year.

3.4.5 Analysis

Data were analyzed for each county by number of programs available for each type of service provided and for each type of targeted population. Originally it was planned that analysis would also include number of participants and the dollar amount of funds. However, many programs involved more than one type of target population and/or more than one type of service. This made it impossible to allocate dollars by target population and/or services. In addition, many organizations did not provide information about the dollar amounts used to run their programs. Nonetheless, the grid does show the number of participants and the dollars funded for each program as a whole when the information is available.

3.4.6 *Resource Guide*

The matrix was developed in Microsoft EXCEL using information from the Access database. Organizations are listed alphabetically within types of organizations in the matrix—agencies, colleges, schools, and unions. Each program is listed alphabetically under its organization as a separate entry. The matrix shows target populations, services provided, service areas, number of participants, dollar amount of funds, and source of funds.

The resource manual is composed of information from the Access database, merged in Microsoft Word with the appropriate headings, and formatted in Aldus Pagemaker. Each organization was treated as an entity with all programs included as part of the organization.

The index was developed in Access from the database. Key words for the index include all categories and sub-categories of targeted populations and services provided. References listed include both the organizational and program names. The references can be looked up in both the grid and the resource guide.

3.5 Review of Literature on Best Practice

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The goal of the review of the literature on best practice is to help study area planners avoid the inconvenience, expense, and inefficiency of "reinventing wheels." A multitude of reports, articles, books, and public agency data document needs, describe model projects, and call for solutions regarding the preparation of America's labor force. Futurists, academics, and business leaders publish theories and principles supporting reform of learning environments. There are many studies which evaluate workforce development and support programs ranging from national pilots and statewide system reorganizations to local school-to-work projects. References to the literature consulted in the course of this project appear throughout this report. Principles emerging from successful workforce development and support programs are discussed in section 4.9 below.

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4. RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Setting the Scene: Motivation for Reform of the Workforce Development and Support System

This report includes information to support planning of an integrated workforce development and support system in the study area, which is composed of the City of Peoria and Peoria, Tazewell, Woodford, Marshall, and Stark counties. It depends upon local, state, and national public data; information elicited by project surveys and focus groups; and a review of the literature regarding best practice in designing, implementing, and operating educational, training, and employment support programs. This section of the report provides an overview of conditions motivating national, state, and local interest in changing the workforce development and support system.

The national effort to reform educational and training systems is not new. Indeed, curriculum reform in all subject areas and at all educational levels has been a major focus of activity and public funding during the entire second half of the twentieth century as Americans have mustered their forces to meet the challenges of the Space Age, the Cold War, the GI Bill, and the Baby Boom. Beginning in the 1960s, community colleges and federally funded employment training programs expanded access to educational opportunities beyond traditional academic institutions and programs, thus building new routes to higher education, employment, and prosperity.

Nonetheless, new conditions demand new solutions. The 1970s witnessed an erosion of U.S. dominance of the international economy and the emergence of significant foreign competition. Since 1973, the productivity of American workers has grown more slowly than that of workers in other industrialized countries, generating a growing consensus that responsibility for these developments rests, at least in part, with the educational and training systems that prepare people to do their jobs. Despite decades of attempts to reform traditional education and provide second-chance learning opportunities for targeted special populations, it became apparent in the 1980s that the abilities of American students were falling behind those of global competitors in crucial disciplinary areas—mathematics and science in particular. At the same time the basic skills of adult workers were found to be woefully deficient.[6] General agreement developed that the United States must improve its educational provision or become progressively less competitive in the global economy.

In addition to factors associated with national prosperity, it has become increasingly obvious that the quality of individual and family lifestyles is inextricably linked to educational attainment. The earnings gap between highly educated and skilled individuals and persons with little education and few skills is widening. Furthermore, better educated workers are less likely to

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[6] Paul T. Decker, Jennifer King Rice, Mary T. Moore, Education and the Economy: An Indicators Report, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, NCES 97-269 (April 1997). See also A Nation at Risk, op.cit..

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become unemployed and more likely to receive training on the job than their less educated counterparts. [7]

Never before has there been as great a demand for highly skilled workers as there is today. Fueled by technological change and reorganization of the workplace, skills needs for current jobs have increased.[8] Most future jobs will require still higher skills levels. According to a recent study by the Hudson Institute, Workforce 2020:

> The high-paying "professional specialty" occupations are expected to grow by 29 percent between 1994 and 2005, faster than any other major occupational category. On the other hand, the low-paying "service occupations" are also slated to grow by 23 percent in these years.[9]

This situation will perpetuate the wage gap, offering a stark choice to workers and young people preparing for adulthood: either become qualified for a high-skilled, well paid occupation or expect to be poor. However, even low-paying occupations will require enhanced literacy, problem solving, communication, and team skills to enable workers to be effective in the workplaces of the future.[10]

Authorities agree that people with some education beyond high school are better equipped for employment than those with a high school education or less. Indeed, virtually all of the good (high-skilled, high-paid) jobs of the future will require some post-secondary education or training. However, only about one-quarter of the 40 percent of high school graduates who go on to college complete their degree programs. Furthermore, in 1994 only 86 percent of young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 had obtained a high school diploma or General Education Development (GED) equivalency degree.[11] Low educational attainment is closely linked to poverty; nearly half of Illinois's 1995 adult welfare recipients had less than high school educations (44.2%).[12] These figures have implications for employers, who must work harder to attract skilled staff or train people in required competencies; nations and communities, which must support their dependent residents; and individuals, whose quality of life increasingly depends upon their educational attainment. It is the collective desire to improve basic education and job skills preparation that drives the national school-to-work movement.

According to Kevin Hollenbeck of the Upjohn Institute,

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[7] See, e.g., Workforce 2020, op.cit., pp. 62-68; Education and the Economy, op.cit., pp. 15-20; Paul Kleppner and Nickolas Theodore, Work After Welfare: Is Illinois's Booming Economy Creating Enough Jobs? The Midwest Job Gap Project (1997), p. 11; Andres Sum, Neeta Fogg and Neal Fogg, "Confronting the Deomographic Challenge: Future Labor Market Prospects of Out-of-School Young Adults", in A Generation of Challenge: Pathways to Success for Urban Youth: A Policy Study of the Levitan Youth Policy Network, Policy Issues Monograph 97-03, Sar Levitan Center for Social Policy Studies, Institute for Policy Studies, Johns Hopkins University (June 1997), p.35.
[8] Work Force Developments: Issues for the Midwest Economy, Federal Reserve Bank (1996), p. 4.
[9] Workforce 2020, op.cit., p. 77.
[10] Jana Zinser, Reinventing Education, Investing in People Project, A joint project of National Conference of State Legislatures and Jobs for the Future, Issue Paper No. 1 (February 1994), p. vii.
[11] Education and the Economy, op.cit., p. 26-28.
[12] Kleppner and Theodore, op.cit., p. 10.

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Important changes are taking place in secondary vocational education programs across the country. The latest reauthorization of the federal vocational education legislation, the Perkins Act [passed in 1990], emphasizes the articulation of secondary and postsecondary programs through Tech Prep collaboration and calls for the integration of academic and vocational education. The 1994 School-to-Work Opportunities Act calls for partnerships between business/industry/labor and education in the form of work-based and school-based learning. The Goals 2000 legislation pushes educational programming toward the implementation of skill standards.[13]

Reform should not stop at secondary level. Institutions of higher education must be included in plans to ease the transition from education to employment if employers' needs for a highly skilled workforce are to be met.[14]

Changes in the educational processes that move young people from education to employment will take different forms in different states.[15] However, all U.S. states and communities are engaged in efforts to rethink and reorganize these processes to incorporate more input from business and industry, more integration of theoretical and practical skills, and more opportunities for work experiences outside the classroom.[16]

At the same time as school-to-work initiatives are getting underway, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 requires states to ensure that a significant and growing number of adult welfare recipients obtain employment. The majority of recipients of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in July 1997, have minimal job skills and work experience. They will be competing with non-welfare recipients for the limited number of low-skilled, low-paid jobs—a number which, despite a booming economy, may well not meet the demand. According to a recent report, Illinois's low-skilled job-seekers face the greatest challenges in Chicago, East St. Louis, and rural part of the state. State-wide, "there are between 62 and 114 job-seekers for every low-skilled job opening in Illinois."[17] Current welfare recipients will need a variety of training and support services to successfully make the transition from dependence on benefits to stable employment and independence. Furthermore, with faster growth in high- than in low-skilled jobs, policy-makers will be well advised to support skills training as a way to reduce poverty, increase employment, and boost productivity.

Federal emphasis on school-to-work and welfare-to-work initiatives has limited attention to the needs of another group of people needing education and support to join the workforce—

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[13] Kevin Hollenbeck, An Evaluation of the Manufacturing Technology Partnership (MTP) Program, Upjohn Institute Technical Report No. 96-007 (February 1996), p. i.

[14] Robert A Wallhaus, "The Roles of Postsecondary Education in Workforce Development: Challenges for State Policy," Prepared for the Wingspread Symposium held in Racine, Wisconsin, March 1996.

[15] Jana Zinser, op.cit., describes contrasting state reorganization designs.

[16] A useful review of evaluations of 49 programs designed to improve the work skills and job opportunities of young people appears in Some Things Do Make a Difference for Youth: A Compendium of Evaluations of Youth Programs and Practices, American Youth Policy Forum (1997).

[17] Kleppner and Theodore, op.cit., p. 7.

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young people between the ages of 18 and 24 who are out-of-school and out-of-work. This age group will increase from 24.9 million in 1995 to over 30 million by 2010. One-quarter of these youths will have been born into poverty. Many will be immigrants or the children of immigrants, with little education and poor language skills. Policy-makers can either choose to abandon these young people to poverty and antisocial, self-destructive behavior, or support appropriately designed means to help them become productive and independent members of their communities. According to a recent study:

> What is needed now is to pay close attention to what has worked, issue a wake-up call, and get on with the job . . . . Completing high school and some postsecondary education, obtaining early work experience, and receiving employer-based training have all shown remarkable correlations with overcoming workplace and earnings deficits for young adults.[18]

Finally, planning for a comprehensive workforce development and support system must address the training needs of the large number of adults, both currently in and currently outside the workforce. Most of the people who will be employed in 2010 are already in the workforce. There is widespread agreement that the basic skills of current workers are unacceptable; according to one estimate, 20 percent of the labor force is functionally illiterate.[19] Furthermore, changes in technology and workplace organization require that workers upgrade their skills. Skills shortages in areas such as information technology are already critical and growing; projected demand for professionals and managers—positions often recruited from among existing staff members—was noted above.[20] In addition, current trends indicate that many adults not currently in the labor force, such as homemakers and retired people, will be seeking employment in years to come.[21] Significant public investment in adult education and training will benefit employers needing skilled workers; workers wishing to develop careers and boost earnings; and communities hoping to retain and attract businesses. According to a recent study;

> Because their fiscal health depends on large bases of employed, taxpaying adults, states have an economic interest in increasing the skill levels of their citizens. It makes little sense for a state to stake its future on a low-paid, low-skill labor force in an era when the businesses that employ such workers can move anyplace in the world that offers lower wages. States can help ensure the existence of a solid economic base by encouraging the development of a highly skilled citizenry equipped with talents not easily found elsewhere.[22]

The implications of this review are clear.

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[18] A Generation of Challenge, op.cit. pp. 6-8.
[19] Scott Liddell and Dayna Ashley-Oehm, Adult Workers: Retraining the American Workforce, Investing in People Project, A joint project of National Conference of State Legislatures and Jobs for the Future, Isse Paper No. 4 (January 1995), p. 20.
[20] Edward Cone, "Short Supply," Information Week, November 3, 1997, pp.44-60.
[21] Workforce 2020, op.cit., pp. 98,103.
[22] Adult Workers, op.cit., p. vii.

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- The American educational system, born in the 1800s, is inadequate to meet the needs of the 21st century. The system must be redesigned and rationalized to improve the basic skills and work-based competencies of young people and ease the transition from school to work.
- Success in the effort to permanently reduce the number of welfare recipients depends upon well-funded and -administered skills training and employment support services.
- Out-of-school, out-of-work young people must be brought into the mainstream of community life by means of appropriately designed and managed training and support services that motivate positive attitudes, inculcate work-based skills, link people with jobs, and provide follow-up assistance.
- Adult education must attract the public interest and investment justified by America's need for a highly skilled workforce to compete in the global economy.
- American businesses cannot afford to focus narrowly on the bottom line. Rather, they must invest in future profits by allocating human, material, and financial resources to education, training, and lifestyle-friendly employment policies.

The following report will describe local demographic, economic, industrial, and employment trends that will affect planning for an integrated workforce development and support system in the study area. It will discuss current and future skills needs indicated by area employers. It will go on to describe current workforce development and support service provision, identifying apparent duplications and gaps. It will then discuss the vision of an ideal workforce development and support system which was collectively developed by area leaders, and conclude by presenting information about best practice which is now emerging from studies of model projects implemented around the country.

4.2 Demographic and Economic Profile

4.2.1 Population

The 1990 populations of study area counties were as follows:

- Peoria   182,827
- Tazewell   123,692
- Woodford   32,653
- Marshall   12,846
- Stark   6,534.

The major city in the study area is Peoria, with a 1990 population of 113,504. Peoria and Tazewell Counties are predominantly urban, with the majority of the population living in the largest communities. The other study area counties are largely rural, with most residents living in small communities or out in the country. (See Figure 1, Appendix 1.)

Peoria County has a greater percentage of young people (between the ages of 20 and 29) than other counties in the study area, possibly reflecting the presence of several colleges within its borders. Rural counties have older populations—a trend which is expected to continue and

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become increasingly pronounced. However, in the year 2020, the most of the people living in the study area will be of working age (between ages 16 and 65).

The racial composition of the study area is predominantly white and non-Hispanic. Peoria County is the only county in the study area with enough non-white residents to calculate projection; its non-white population is projected to grow from 16 percent of the total population in 1990 to 18 percent in 2020.[23]

The populations of all study area counties except Stark are projected to grow in the next few years. Woodford County is likely to grow most rapidly, with Tazewell, Peoria, and Marshall experiencing more moderate increases. Having experienced steady decline during the 20th century, the population of Stark County is projected to continue to shrink, although decline will slow during the first ten years of the next century. (See Figure 2, Appendix 1.)

This information has the following implications for workforce development and support planning:

- The study area's growing population will require expanded educational, training, and employment support provision at all levels, but particularly for adult workers.
- The growing rural population will require purpose-designed services to meet its workforce development and support needs.
- With greatest projected growth in the number of middle-aged adults, employment support services and benefits including child care, elder care, transportation, flexible scheduling, and career development services will become increasingly necessary.

4.2.2 Educational Attainment

Most adults over age 25 living in study area counties have educational attainments of high school diplomas or less. Approximately one in ten has less than a ninth grade education, while between 11 and 13 percent have some high school, but no diploma. Stark County has the least educated population, with two-thirds of its population having, at most, completed high school. Peoria County has the best-educated population, with nearly half of its residents having at least some college, and seven percent having earned a graduate or professional degree. (See Figure 3, Appendix 1.)

Peoria County is the only county in the study area with a significant minority population. Close examination of data for that County indicates that educational attainment is strongly linked with race/ethnicity. Twenty-nine percent of Hispanic and 40 percent of African-American adults dropped out before completing high school; 13 percent of Hispanic and 12 percent of African-American adults have less than ninth grade educations. Only one-fifth of white adults have less than a high school diploma. (See Figure 4, Appendix 1.) While national figures indicate that high school completion rates for African-Americans has climbed substantially over the last 20

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[23] Population projections appearing in this report were obtained from Roy Treadway and Delbert Ervin, Illinois Population Trends 1990 to 2020, State of Illinois (1997).

years (83 percent in 1994 compared with 72 percent in 1972), the completion rate for Hispanics has not changed significantly during that time period, hovering at around 60 percent.[24] Study area data indicates that minority students continue to face significant educational challenges.

This information has the following implications for workforce development and support planning:

- Study area young people must be encouraged and supported to complete high school and obtain some postsecondary training.
- Since many area adults finished their educations some years ago and did not go very far in school, adult education and skills-based training must be a priority to develop the highly skilled work force needed by area employers in the next century.
- Support and special programs focused on the needs of minority residents will be necessary to level the racial and ethnic playing field for access to educational, employment, and earnings opportunities.

4.2.3 Employment and Unemployment

At the time of writing, unemployment levels in the study area are at historic lows: 3.7 percent in Tazewell, 4.2 percent in Marshall and Peoria, and 5.3 percent in Stark counties. At 1.9 percent, Woodford County's is the second lowest unemployment rate in the state.[25] Unemployment is projected to rise somewhat in Peoria, Tazewell, Marshall, and Woodford Counties between 1997 and 2002, then decline or level off. In Stark County, unemployment is projected to rise, reaching nine percent by 2007. (See Figure 5, Appendix 1.)

The study area's labor force is currently composed of almost equal numbers of men and women. Following national trends, female employment increased from 40 to 45 percent of the total labor force between 1980 and 1990. (See Figure 6, Appendix 1.)

There are some significant disparities regarding labor force participation among different sex, racial and ethnic groups. In Peoria County, Hispanic (70%) and white (69%) males are more often employed than African American males (55%). There is less difference in the percentages of employed females, with half of white, 48 percent of African-American, and 53 percent of Hispanic women participating in the labor force. At 11 percent, more African-American males and, at three percent, fewer white females are reported to be unemployed and looking for work than any other group. More white women are unemployed, but not looking for work, than any other sex, racial, or ethnic group in the County. (See Figure 7, Appendix 1.)

National data indicates that educational attainment affects labor force participation. Nonetheless, there are some striking differences by race and ethnicity in employment status among Peoria County 16- to 19-year-old high school dropouts. At 71 percent employed, Hispanics are almost twice as likely as whites (40%) and more than four times as likely as

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[24] Education and the Economy, op.cit., p 26.
[25] Unemployment rates are for September 1997 and were provided by the Illinois Department of Employment Security, Economic Information and Analysis Division.

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African-Americans (17%) to be employed. One-fifth of all youths are reported to be unemployed, but looking for work. While no Hispanics are unemployed and not looking for work, 40 percent of whites and 65 percent of African-Americans are in this category. (See Figure 8, Appendix 1.)

Nearly three-quarters of study area workers are employed as wage and salary workers in the private sector. Approximately one in ten are employed in the private nonprofit sector. Approximately five percent respectively work for local government organizations or are self-employed. Remaining workers are employed by state and federal governments or work as unpaid family workers. Significantly more rural than urban residents are self-employed. (See Figure 9, Appendix 1.)

This information has the following implications for workforce development and support planning:

- Under conditions of low unemployment, there is increased need for local provision of services efficiently matching job openings with qualified job-seekers.
- Policy-makers, educators, employers, and other community leaders must be vigilant and active in combating both racism and other cultural factors undermining equal labor force participation of members of all sex, racial, and ethnic groups.
- Skills training and employment support services are urgently needed by out-of-school, out-of-work young people living in the study area.
- The large proportion of study area wage and salary workers indicates the probable effectiveness of training and employment support programs developed with strong leadership and participation from area employers.

4.2.4 Income, Poverty, and Welfare Dependency

With the exception of median household income in Woodford County, family, household, and per capita money incomes are lower for study area counties than for the State of Illinois as a whole. Incomes are lower across the board in rural than in urban study area counties. Incomes are higher in Woodford and Tazewell Counties than in the other study area counties. (See Figure 10, Appendix 1.)

Incomes of men are higher than those of women; incomes of non-whites are lower than those of whites. For example, national figures indicate that white women earn 74 percent of what white males earn for the same work. African-American men earn 71 percent and African-American women, 62 percent, of what white males earn for the same work respectively. Hispanic males earn 58 percent and Hispanic females, 54 percent, of what white males earn for the same work respectively.[26]

In the only study area county having a significant minority population, Peoria County, household income figures indicate that, overall, minority households have lower incomes than

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[26] [national earnings data]
Central Illinois Workforce Issues 1997, Applied Social Research Unit, Illinois State University

white households and African-American households have lower incomes than Hispanic households. Over one-half of African-American households report household incomes of less than $15,000, compared to 28 percent of Hispanic and 23 percent of white households. By contrast, one-tenth of African-American and one-fifth of Hispanic households report incomes of over $50,000, compared to one-quarter of white households. (See Figure 11, Appendix 1.)

The percentage of persons receiving welfare assistance has dropped steadily since 1994 in all study area counties except Marshall, where there was a slight increase from 1996 to 1997. The most precipitous drop has been in Stark County, which is remarkable considering its comparatively high levels of unemployment and low educational attainment and household incomes. (See Figure 12, Appendix 1.)

The majority (between 48 and 68 percent) of study area adults receiving Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) benefits have at least a high school diploma or GED and some work experience. Between one-quarter and one-third of adults receiving TANF benefits lack a high school diploma or GED, but have some work experience. Only a small minority (between four and 13 percent) lack both a high school diploma or GED and work experience. Peoria County TANF recipients tend to be more lacking in both education and work experience compared to TANF recipients living in other study area counties. (See Figure 13, Appendix 1.) Most (92%) of Illinois's adult welfare recipients are women.[27]

This information has the following implications for workforce development and support planning:

- To redress imbalances in income among different sex, racial, and ethnic groups, employers must use scrupulously fair labor practices and educational, training, and employment support programs must target the special needs of minority groups and women.
- Since educational attainment is not the major barrier to study area welfare recipients entering the workforce, local welfare-to-work services should concentrate on personal counseling, workforce readiness, job-match, employment support, and follow-up service provision.
- With women at all skills levels entering the labor force in unprecedented numbers, communities and employers must provide the family-friendly support services and benefits necessary to retain workers without placing unacceptable strain on families.

4.2.5 Study Area Industries

By and large, the study area reflects the nationwide economic boom, with an 11 percent increase in the number of business establishments between 1987 and 1997 and a nine percent increase projected between 1997 and 2007. Increases for the same time period are also projected for numbers of employees and annual payrolls. Only in Stark County are numbers of businesses

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[27] Kleppner and Theodore, op.cit., p. 10. See also Figure 16, Appendix 1, for disparities between wages paid to men and women for occupations with at least 50 openings per year in the study area.

and employees declining, although payrolls are expected to show a modest increase in the next ten years.

The majority of area workers (33%) are employed by service industries, although manufacturing comes a close second, with 25 percent of the workforce, and retail follows, employing 22 percent of area workers. The percentages of workers employed in services and retail industries are projected to increase to 38 percent and 23 percent respectively, while the percentage of manufacturing workers is projected to decline slightly to 24 percent.

Although service industries employ the largest number of workers in each study area county, there is considerable variation among counties regarding the other major employers. Peoria County, a regional educational, health, and governmental center, employs a larger percentage of service workers (38%) than Marshall (21%), Tazewell, (25%), or Woodford (31%) counties. Other major employers of Peoria County residents are, in order of significance, manufacturing (22%) and retail trade (20%). Stark County also employs a significant percentage of service workers (37%); other major employers are retail trade (25%) and finance, insurance, and real estate (13%). It is worthy of remark that, even in Stark and Marshall Counties, agriculture is not a major employer; however, this data does not include self-employed farmers—an occupation that is projected to grow.

On average, the best current and projected wages are paid to manufacturing employees. Construction, wholesale trade, and financial services jobs also pay moderately well. Services and retail trade pay the lowest wages of study area industries for which data can be calculated. Of all industrial groups, manufacturing industries generate by far the largest annual payroll. Higher wages are paid in Peoria and Tazewell Counties than in other parts of the study area. (See Figures 14A-14F, Appendix 1.)

This information has the following implications for workforce development and support planning:

- Career counselors, job-seekers, students, and parents should base educational and training plans on information about job availability and wages associated with different kinds of employment.
- School-to-work, welfare-to-work, skills upgrade training, and other workforce development programs in study area counties can be designed on the basis of the presence of major industries in each county.

4.3 Growth Occupations, Qualifications, and Skills

Which occupations are currently most in demand? Which will offer the most job openings in the years to come? Which occupations will grow the fastest? Of these "growth occupations," which pay well and which do not pay well? What kinds of qualifications does an individual need to get a job in a growth occupation? What kinds of skills are employers looking for when filling growth occupation jobs? The answers to these questions are essential to inform planning of educational, training, and career development programs for the study area.

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Please note that the following discussion focuses mainly on the study area as a whole. Details for individual counties appear in the figures in Appendix 1. It is worthy of remark that a significant and growing number of people commute from Marshall and Stark Counties (as well as other counties outside the study area) to work in urban study area counties—Peoria County, in particular.[28]

4.3.1 Growth Occupations

According to the Illinois Department of Employment Security, the ten study area occupations for which there are the largest number of annual openings are:

Position	Number of annual openings
1. Salespersons, Retail	228
2. Registered Nurses	199
3. Cashiers	187
4. Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers	184
5. Waiters and Waitresses	178
6. Food Preparation Workers	145
7. Truck Drivers, Heavy	136
8. General Managers and Top Executives	122
9. Food Preparation and Service Workers, Fast Food	145
10. Janitors, Cleaners, and Maids	117

Only two of the top ten occupations, registered nurses and general managers and top executives, require postsecondary education or offer better than average pay. However, included in the 25 study area occupations for which there are the largest number of annual openings are computer systems analysts, engineers, farmers, elementary school teachers, first line supervisors and managers (marketing and sales), managers and administrators, and sales representatives (excluding retail)—all occupations paying better than average, some of which require postsecondary education. (See Figure 15, Appendix 1.)

There is strong evidence that the need for information technology staff of all kinds is seriously underestimated in the public data. This issue will be discussed in section 4.3.3 below.

4.3.2 Qualifications

What educational preparation and other qualifications do people need to work in study area growth occupations? Is there a difference between what men and women can expect to earn by working in growth occupations? How well do wages reflect investment of time and money in postsecondary education?

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[28] Central Illinois Workforce Issues, Applied Social Research Unit/Community Research Services, Illinois State University (1995) includes detailed commuting data for eight counties including those comprising the study area for the 1997 project.

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Very few study area growth occupations require extensive postsecondary educational preparation. However, many of them favor applicants with at least some on-the-job training and/or work experience. It is noteworthy that many well-paid, study area growth occupations do not require degrees. For example, marketing and sales managers, who mainly need work experience in a related occupation, can expect to earn between $32,800 and $56,850. After short-term on-the-job-training lasting approximately one month, truck drivers can expect to earn between $30,295 and $40,040. Non-retail sales representatives can expect earnings of $26,040 to $41,750 on the basis of between one and 12 months of on-the-job training.

With the exception of low-paid fast-food preparation and dining room attendance jobs, all occupations pay women less than men working in the same occupation. However, the difference between men's and women's earnings varies among growth occupations. For example, women working as registered nurses can expect to earn only five percent less than men doing the same job, while female sales people in both retail and non-retail organizations earn, on average, 33 percent less than their male counterparts. Good jobs for women, measured by higher than average earnings and a relatively small difference between wages paid to males and females, are nursing (-5%), secondary school teaching (-10%), elementary school teaching (-15%), computer systems support (-15%), laboring and materials moving (14%), and truck driving (-16%).

For both men and women, investment in postsecondary education pays off in the form of wages paid to members of highly skilled growth occupations. People working in the highest-paid occupation, general managers and top executives, must have at least a bachelor's degree and extensive work experience; however, they can expect to earn between $148,000 and $456,000 a year. All occupations requiring at least a bachelor's degree pay, at the high end, over $40,000 per year. Although there are more study area openings in occupations demanding less educational preparation, most of these jobs promise significantly lower earnings. (See Figure 16, Appendix 1.)

How well do study area educational and training institutions meet the challenge of supplying qualified people for openings in growth occupations? Available data addressing this issue must be interpreted carefully, because many growth occupations have no corresponding training programs generating specifically qualified graduates. For example, while there are 543 annual openings for transportation and material handling personnel, only 54 study area residents complete training programs in this area, apparently meeting only one-tenth of the need. However, employers require no minimum qualifications for these positions, and, generally speaking, within this classification only truck drivers receive specific vocational training.

Conversely, the data show that while there are 82 annual openings in math and computer science, 65 people complete educational programs in this disciplinary area. While this disparity reveals a shortfall between demand and supply, it does not tell the whole story. The technological revolution increasingly requires computer, information systems, and telecommunications skills in virtually all occupations. For example, there is a major nationwide shortage of business-savvy information technology professionals. Thus, according to one

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educator, "It [information technology training] needs to go beyond IT students. We need to have people studying finance or management to understand technology too."[29]

With these provisions in mind, it is still possible to identify occupations where demand exceeds supply: transportation and material handling, marketing and sales, construction, and math and computer science. Study area educators, workforce support professionals, students, and job-seekers can use this information for program and career planning purposes. (See Figure 17, Appendix 1.)

4.3.3 Surveyed Employers' Needs for Workers, Qualifications, and Skills

One-hundred study area employers representing industries that hire people in sampled high paying growth occupations were interviewed about their needs for workers in these occupations, the jobs they most often fill, and the jobs they find most difficult to fill. (See Figures 18 and 19, Appendix 1.)

Which occupations are most in demand in the study area? Interviewers elicited information useful in indicating the need for workers in selected occupations within the next five years. During the next five years, surveyed employers expect to be hiring:

- 1,049 stock clerks and sales floor staff;
- 652 registered nurses;
- 370 computer systems analysts;
- 135 food service & lodging managers; and
- 114 teachers.

These occupations represent the greatest need among interviewed employers. See Figure 20, Appendix 1 for hiring information about these and other occupations.

It is noteworthy that according to supplementary information provided by major local employers, both data collected by government agencies (the US Department of Labor and the Illinois Department of Employment Security) and information provided by employers surveyed for this study seriously underestimate the area's need for people with a wide range of Information Technology (IT) skills. Jim Miller, Manager of Administrative Services in Corporate Information Services at Caterpillar, reports that at his company alone there are between 300 and 430 current openings for IT professionals including programmers (300), hardware installers and maintenance staff (50), design and process programmers (40), and people with other related skills (40). In a November 1997 interview, Mr. Miller said that the problem of finding workers with IT skills goes far beyond Caterpillar's needs, citing a shortfall of 200,000 professionals world-wide. "This bubble will not go away in 2000. It will take ten years for it to wash out because of the backlog that has built up."

Larry Hicks, President of Cyberdesic in Peoria, agrees, maintaining that the local demand for IT professionals is, to some extent, masked by current recruitment strategies. In addition to

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[29] Edward Cone, op.cit., p. 48.

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trying to attract people with these prized skills from other parts of the country, local employers are "stealing them from each other," thus inflating the salaries which must be offered. Furthermore, the current skills of IT professionals need improvement. "People with technical skills don't necessarily have relationship skills. We only hire persons will all skills— programming and relationship skills along with experience. These people are hard to come by." In a November 1997 interview, Mr. Hicks estimated an immediate local need for 400 IT professionals, with an additional demand for 200 during the next twelve months.

Francis Cheung, Executive Director of Strategic Planning at St. Francis Hospital, Peoria, discussed the career opportunities created by the need for IT staff—particularly for members of racial and ethnic minority groups. In November 1997, he commented, "Technology is an area where a diverse population can enter. [Computer] programs don't know the color of the programmers. Mathematics is a universal language." Mr. Cheung echoes estimates made by Hicks and Miller of approximately 500 local openings for IT professionals during the next year.[30]

What qualifications do job applicants need to be hired for study area occupations? Equal numbers of employers require no educational qualifications (28) and a high school diploma (28) for jobs. Equal numbers of employers also require associate degrees (13) and professional degrees or certification (13) for jobs. The largest number of employers—41— require either job experience and on-the-job training, or no job training at all. Twenty-two employers require vocational certifications.

Of course, necessary qualifications vary according to occupation. For example, six employers require a high school diploma and five require job experience and/or training for clerical positions. Almost all of the 12 surveyed employers of teachers require a bachelor's degree; eight require certification. It is noteworthy that more employers of computer systems analysts require associate's degrees (4) than bachelor's degrees (2); and five of these employers require job experience and/or training. (See Figure 21, Appendix 1.)

Surveyed employers were asked about specific skills sought in applicants for sampled high paying growth occupations, most often hired occupations, and occupations they find most difficult to fill. Generally speaking, similar skills were required for each type of occupation and variations were not significant. The categories of skills most often sought in job applicants by area employers are, in order of importance, interactive; personal; education, training, or work experience; occupational knowledge; and computer skills.

Employers seeking interactive skills are most interested in applicants with communication and customer service abilities. Those seeking personal characteristics select applicants with a positive attitude. By far, the most important education, training, or work experience qualification for job applicants is experience. It is noteworthy that area employers seek a wide range of computer skills in applicants for employment. (See Figures 22, 23, 24, and 25 Appendix 1.)

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[30] Interviews conducted by Applied Social Research Unit staff members at the request of the Central Illinois Private Industry Council.

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What shortcomings do area employers identify in job applicants? The majority of surveyed employers report that job applicants are deficient in personal characteristics which include adaptability, attitude, dependability, motivation, responsibility, stress tolerance, work ethic, common sense, dress, moral character, personal hygiene, patience, and maturity. Next in importance was education and work experience, followed by interactive skills, and occupational knowledge. (See Figure 26, Appendix 1.)

Which skills will be most in demand in the near future? Half of surveyed employers said that computer skills will be most needed by workers in their organizations during the next five to ten years. An approximately equal number of employers said that technological literacy (23%) and interactive skills (22%) will be most in demand. Specific occupational knowledge (17%), personal characteristics (11%), and education or work experience (11%) were next in importance. Considering national data and qualitative information about the need for good basic skills among workers, it is noteworthy that very few surveyed employers mentioned a strong future need for language or mathematics skills. (See Figure 27, Appendix 1.)

Why do employers hire new employees? According to surveyed employers, the lion's share of hiring is done because of turnover. Second as a motivation for hiring is organizational growth and expansion. Promotions come next, while retirements and skills deficiencies in current employees are the least important specified reasons for taking on new staff. (See Figure 28, Appendix 1.) Retirements are likely to become a more important reason for hiring in the near future, however, as Baby Boomers age.

How do employers recruit new employees? The largest number of surveyed employers (77%) recruit job applicants through newspaper advertisements. Almost half use college placement services. One-third recruit by word of mouth. Fourteen percent and 13 percent use the Illinois Department of Employment Security and temporary agencies respectively. One in ten contract with professional recruiters. Over one-quarter of employers use "other" techniques including employee referrals, promotion from within, in-house advertising, acceptance of walk-in applications, magazine advertisements, and job fairs. (See Figure 29, Appendix 1.)

As low unemployment rates indicate, study area businesses are booming and there is a lot of hiring going on. According to a Caterpillar Group President Gerald S. Flaherty, the area's major employer has hired 1,200 new employees since the beginning of 1996, "most of whom are working in the Peoria area in accounting, engineering, information services, and marketing positions . . . . We've hired more people since the beginning of 1996 until now than in any similar time period in recent company history." Caterpillar plans to "add to our work force to support our growth initiatives." According to company literature, in 1996 and 1997 Caterpillar hired over 400 college graduates to fill full-time positions, "primarily in engineering, information services, accounting, and marketing areas."[31]

Big Yellow is not alone. Both employer survey interviews and focus group discussions conducted for this project indicate that the strong and active study area labor market requires an

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[31] Caterpillar World Wide Web page, www.caterpillar.com/news/1997/0897.htm.

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almost unlimited number of skilled job applicants. Successful applicants will be prepared in the major skills areas pinpointed above—computer skills, technological literacy, interactive skills and a healthy mixture of education and work experience. In addition, applicants should cultivate the personal characteristics that will allow them to both get and keep rewarding employment.

4.4 Current Workforce Development and Support Service Provision

In the study area, workforce development and support services are offered by the following types of providers:

- Educational institutions;
- Employers;
- Public and private social service agencies; and
- Unions.

Some partnerships have been forged between employers and educational institutions, employers and public agencies, secondary and postsecondary educational programs; educational institutions and public agencies; and public and social service agencies with complementary missions and resources. These partnerships help to stimulate and plan collaborative programs and services; design and implement a range of educational and training opportunities; and support the needs of special populations. However, at present, most study area educational, training, and employment support services operate independently. The goal of this section of the report is to describe study area provision of workforce development and support services; identify strengths and weaknesses of current service provision; and discuss opportunities and resources for further collaboration and, where possible, integration.

4.4.1 Employer-provided Training

Almost all of the employers surveyed for this project provide training for new employees. About three-quarters of employers train new staff in specific occupational knowledge. Approximately one-third provide training in interactive skills. About one-quarter of employers offer training in computer skills, and between 15 and 23 percent train staff in safety and sanitation matters. (See Figure 30, Appendix 1.)

Most training for new employees is done on the job by co-workers. However, training methods vary by occupation. For example, only 67 percent of employers of first line production supervisors provide on-the-job training; other methods include self-study, simulations, and lectures. About half of this training is provided by in-house training staff; the rest is delivered by co-workers, training staff in other organizations, and other providers. Three-quarters of teachers employed by study area organizations are given on-the-job training by co-workers. An additional 50 percent receive other forms of training provided by training staff in other organizations (58%), training staff in the employer's organization (17%), and computer-based training (8%). Computer systems analysts are more likely than other study area workers to receive training from staff in other organizations (50%) and computer-based training (38%). Health services

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employees are more likely to receive training from staff in their employer's organization (67%) than other study area workers. (See Figure 31, Appendix 1.)

4.4.2 Employer Participation in Community Workforce Development Programs and Services

Policy-makers and experts agree that to be successful, reform of education and training, including school-to-work, welfare-to-work, and other workforce development and support programs must involve employers at all stages. To what extent are study area employers currently involved in workforce development projects? Eighteen percent of employers surveyed for this project reported their organizations currently participate in such projects and 70 percent indicated willingness to participate. Only 11 percent were unwilling to participate. (See Figure 32, Appendix 1.)

The largest number of study area employers that participate in workforce development work with local high-schools or colleges to offer skill-based training and work experience opportunities such as internships or co-ops (10). Other participating employers work with public agencies (Department of Employment Security, Department of Public Aid, Private Industry Councils) to advertise positions and place job-seekers in jobs (3). Still others work with civic organizations, including the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, and AARP, giving presentations, offering free classes, facilitating community-based projects, and providing grants (6). Employers are also represented in organizations such as the Private Industry Council and Peoria Educational Region for Employment and Career Training (PERFECT).

Two survey respondents made negative comments about their firms' experience with participating in workforce development initiative. An employer that had worked with the Department of Public Aid to place recipients in jobs was not pleased because applicants without appropriate certification were referred and were "no use to them." An employer that had developed a co-op program with an area high school commented that the arrangement did not work because of physical space limitations and an unspecified problem with the teachers. (See Figure 33, Appendix 1.)

Surveyed employers indicated interest in working with educators and agencies in a variety of capacities to meet a wide range of needs. Many were interested in working with schools and colleges in an advisory capacity (12). Several (6) were prepared to offer work experience opportunities, including job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, and co-ops. Still others were willing to provide resources, including use of facilities (7), equipment (1), and manpower (3). Employers were interested in making careers presentations or participating in career fairs or days (6). They were also willing to work with agencies (2), offer training seminars or workshops (3), and place co-op students in jobs (1). (See the list of employers interested in collaborating on workforce development and support projects in Appendix 3.) Barriers to participation in workforce development projects mentioned by several employers were the time, cost, and effort required (2). One respondent indicated s/he didn't feel the company had anything to offer. (See Figure 34, Appendix 1.)

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4.4.3 Workforce Development and Support Provided by Educators, Agencies, and Unions

Traditionally, the lion's share of workforce development in the United States has been done by educators in high school and college classrooms. While this report calls for redesign of traditional high school curricula and college degree programs, it does not present already well-known information—that the State of Illinois is divided into school districts where elementary, secondary, and community college educational resources are available to all residents. Rather, it attempts to draw an admittedly partial picture of programs and services that have been deliberately designed to help members of specific groups of people—young people, adult learners, poor people, older adults, individuals with disabilities, non-English speakers, and workers who have lost their jobs—to qualify for, obtain, and keep employment. Thus, reported programs include high school and college programs with a work-based component, such as co-ops, job shadowing, internships, and youth apprenticeships. They also include job readiness and skills training programs for adults. Programs and services appearing in this report also help employers find workers and assist schools and agencies in developing links with business and industry. Finally, the report includes programs and services offered by labor unions—potential partners in the workforce preparation and support endeavor which are too often not included in planning and development efforts.

To identify workforce development and support services available to residents of the study area, a survey of educational institutions, social service agencies, and labor unions was conducted during the summer and autumn of 1997. This survey elicited responses from 80 organizations which provided information about 191 programs. (Materials associated with the Resource Guide Survey appear in Appendix 5.) Of these programs, 72 are provided by schools, 79 are administered by social service agencies, 31 are offered by colleges, and 9 are provided by unions. A summary of providers, programs, and target populations is provided by the *Central Illinois Workforce Development Guide* which is printed in Appendix 6 of this report. In addition to providing data for analysis, the *Guide* was designed to be of use for networking, referral, and program planning purposes.

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Analysis of the information elicited by this survey yields information about types of services available and specific target populations served in the City of Peoria and the five-county study area. The following tables indicate the numbers of programs available in study area counties by type of workforce development services and types of target populations. Please note that a single program often provides more than one type of services and serves more than one target population.

Targeted populations	Stark	Marshall	Woodford	Tazewell	Peoria	City of Peoria
adults	14	12	20	17	30	7
at risk; drop outs	6	5	11	9	18	4
business people	11	10	11	12	12	0
displaced workers	4	3	5	3	5	0
minorities	0	0	1	1	0	0
low income; unemployed	10	4	11	10	15	1
older adults (55+)	4	4	3	2	4	0
people with disabilities	7	5	12	9	11	0
schools; agencies	2	3	5	4	8	0
students	16	7	36	40	48	3

Services provided	Stark	Marshall	Woodford	Tazewell	Peoria	City of Peoria
adult basic education (remedial)	7	6	12	7	14	2
career planning & assessment	22	13	41	49	62	8
English as a Second Language (ESL)	0	0	1	1	3	1
job readiness	13	8	30	26	33	5
job search & placement	20	18	38	32	36	1
pre-business	2	2	3	3	5	0
skills training	11	8	11	11	12	0
support services	17	11	23	25	36	5
work-based learning	28	18	40	47	56	5

It is perhaps not surprising that, with the exception of job search and placement services, more workforce development and support services are offered to residents of Peoria County than to residents of other counties. What is noteworthy, however, is the range and number of services available in counties with smaller populations. Stark County, in particular, is well represented in all service categories except the provision of programs concerning English as a Second Language. With a somewhat larger population, Marshall County is comparatively less well served. Woodford County is especially strong in the provision of job search and placement

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services, offering an even larger number of programs than the more populous Peoria County. Woodford County is also a leader in offering job readiness training.

In Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties, the largest number of programs offers career planning and assessment services, and the second most offered service is work-based learning. In Marshall and Stark Counties, the most commonly provided service is work-based learning. Job search and placement services, employment support services, and job readiness training programs are available to a moderate degree in all counties. (See Figure 35, Appendix 1.)

The best-served target population is composed of high school and college students. The second largest number of programs targets adults; low income and unemployed people vie for third place with at risk youth and dropouts. Considering population sizes and densities, the best overall service provision is offered by Woodford and Stark Counties. (See Figure 36, Appendix 1.)

By and large, collaborative programs and services offered in the study area stem from the individual initiative of educators, employers and social service providers. However, there are ongoing and increasing attempts, driven by national and state policies, to generate more collaboration and, in some cases, integration of services.

- In the 1980s, the Central Illinois Private Industry Council, established to administer Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) funds, was structured to include leadership from education, industry, social service agencies, and local government in its five-county service delivery area.
- With the formation of the Central Illinois Workforce Network in the early 1990s, dialogue was expanded among stakeholders in an eight-county region.
- Stimulated by the nationwide move toward establishment of One-Stop Career Centers, services provided by the Central Illinois Private Industry Council and the Illinois Department of Employment Security were brought together under the single roof of the Illinois Employment Training Center in 1996.
- At the same time, with development of an Education to Careers structure for the State of Illinois, the Peoria Educational Region for Employment and Career Training (PERFECT) was formed to assume leadership responsibility for incorporating input from community-based organizations, business, labor, education, parents, and students to create a comprehensive system facilitating the transition of area young people through various stages of education into employment.
- Stimulated by federal welfare reform legislation, there is growing pressure on area agencies, community-based organizations, and employers to train welfare recipients for work, find employment for them, and provide a range of support services to help them to remain independent.
- Area stakeholders in workforce development are involved in the most ambitious project to date—plans for a new career and technology center to be located in downtown

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Peoria. This center will facilitate information and resource sharing among employers, educators, and agencies; and training in high-demand technical skills.[32]

Thus, the stage has been set for the planning of collaborative workforce development and support programs and services for the study area on an unprecedented scale.

4.5 Components of an Ideal Integrated Workforce Development and Support System

The employers, educators, elected officials, economic developers, social service professionals, agency clients, and students who participated in the 14 focus groups conducted for this project collectively described a vision of the ideal integrated workforce development and support system for the study area. (Reports of individual focus group discussions appear in Appendix 4 of this report.) This vision encompassed the following elements:

- The *mindset* necessary to create and nurture the ideal system;
- The *educational system* (elementary through university) that prepares young people for employment;
- The training opportunities, credentialing systems, working conditions, and support services that enable adults to *obtain, retain, and improve employment*;
- The ideal *composition, structure, and administration of a workforce development and support agency*; and
- The *national, state, and local policies and systems* necessary to support the ideal integrated workforce development and support system.

These elements are summarized below with the number of focus group participants who independently articulated each observation appearing in parentheses.[33] Participants described both a broadly conceived workforce development and support system, encompassing all individuals, organizations, and activities associated with employment, education, training, and delivery of support services, *and* a publicly administered agency providing direct services to local employers and job-seekers.

4.5.1 Mindset

Regardless of their diverse backgrounds and interests, focus group participants agreed that the mindset of all stakeholders in the workforce development and support system must change to foster the ultimate goals of the system—a skilled local workforce available to meet employers' needs; good jobs to support local workers and their families; and a good quality of life for all people living in the study region. Discussion focused on the mindset of *employers and labor unionists*; of teachers, administrators, parents, and students regarding formal *education*; of public *agency* staff members; and of members of the wider *community* regarding occupations, training, and the workforce development and support system.

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[32] Paul Gordon, "Cullinan unveils plans for Bergner block," <u>Journal Star</u>, March 7, 1997.

[33] Incidences of observations are under-reported because if several members of any given focus group made exactly the same point, only one observation was recorded in the flip chart notes upon which this analysis is based.

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Employers and labor unionists

Focus group participants suggested that, to support the development and strength of the local workforce, area employers and labor unionists should:

- Work together to develop the local workforce, rather than clinging to the traditional adversarial relationship (1);
- Promote acceptance and support of young people in the workplace (1);
- Recognize the strengths of older, more mature trainees and job applicants (1);
- Give preference to local job applicants in recruitment and hiring (5); and
- Use the local workforce development and support agency (1).

Education

Participants in the educational process must change their attitudes and approaches in the following ways:

- Teachers must believe it is their responsibility to produce graduates who are qualified for jobs (1).
- Administrators must become more flexible about changing school curricula, schedules, assessment guidelines, and rules to accommodate innovative work preparation programs (1).
- Parents must change their attitudes about children being placed in specialized training programs, held back because of poor performance, or counseled to consider post-secondary training other than four-year college degree programs (3).
- Students must take more seriously opportunities for work experience and vocational training (1).

Agency

Focus group participants recognized that staff members of the different agencies involved in the process of integrating services must also change the ways they think about and do their jobs. They must:

- Develop a business mindset to better support the needs of all clients (1);
- Embrace change in work responsibilities instead of feeling threatened by change (1); and
- Develop an image for the workforce development and support agency which is different from the traditional negative image of the unemployment office (1).

Community

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Focus group participants called on members of the wider community to change the ways they conceptualize work and education by recognizing:

- All work and occupations are worthy of respect (3);
- All community organizations and residents must take responsibility for preparing local children for employment (4);
- The good earnings and lifestyle opportunities associated with many traditionally "blue collar" occupations (2); and
- The value of alternatives to four-year college programs to develop job skills (4).

Finally, participants pointed out that a community-wide focus on economic development initiatives, such as attracting new industry, developing tourism and recreational opportunities, marketing the community to groups such as retirees, and developing or enhancing local services (i.e., child care, health care, transportation), will foster availability of good jobs, skilled workers, and a high quality of life for all residents (4).

4.5.2   Educational System

Focus groups spent more time discussing the preparation of young people for employment than any other topic. The following summary necessarily glosses over the diversity and richness of information provided by participants. However, it indicates a high degree of consensus about shortcomings of the current educational system and ways it should be changed to meet employers' needs for highly skilled, motivated workers. Focus group participants believe the educational system should:

- Train teachers and counselors to better prepare students for employment (3);
- Provide aptitude assessment and careers guidance for all students to support selection of skills development programs and work experience opportunities (i.e., co-op, job shadowing, internship, work-study, apprenticeship, etc.) (3);
- Involve employers, workers, and teachers in providing employability and careers training throughout K-12 education (25);
- Integrate job skills training into high school and college curricula to better prepare students for future employment (30);
- Provide a variety of well organized and supervised work experience opportunities for all students (20);
- Engage the interest and raise the skills levels of minority students (1);
- Work with area employers to create specific skills-based programs to be delivered in both classrooms and workplaces (1); and
- Change the environment and administration of secondary education to promote discipline, good work ethic, and achievement among students and graduates (12).

These goals can only be achieved if changes in mindset allow educators to become more flexible regarding curricula, scheduling, and giving credit for out-of-school activities; employers to recognize the long-term benefits of investing human, financial, and material resources in

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education; and families and other community members to stop thinking of vocational skills training as low-status or second best.

4.5.3 Obtaining, Retaining, and Improving Employment

Adults depend upon a wide range of training opportunities and qualifications to get jobs and develop careers. Staying employed and/or continuing to work for the same employer are strongly associated with positive working conditions and access to support services. Focus group participants recommended the following measures to nurture employment and advancement among area adults:

- Clarify, standardize, and make portable the skills and credentials needed for specific jobs (3).
- Assess and monitor skills and retraining needs of area employers, current employees, and job applicants (4).
- Make the best possible use of skills training resources—especially community colleges (4).
- Make adult education and training as user-friendly as possible with regard to location, scheduling, and classroom climate (4).
- Promote employee loyalty by providing full-time, well-paid, flexible employment with good benefits and working conditions (6).
- Offer a range of support services including high quality, accessible child care and transportation—particularly in rural areas (14).
- Provide financial and emotional support to job-seekers throughout the training and job search process (4).
- Tailor training and job search support services for the needs of special populations, including newly released prisoners and persons with disabilities (3).

4.5.4 Composition, Structure, and Administration of the Workforce Development and Support Agency

This research was designed to inform construction of an integrated workforce development and support system in the study area. While this system, broadly conceived, is composed of many and diverse organizations including schools, businesses, unions, and others, it has at its heart a publicly administered agency whose role is to provide services for employers, educators, job-seekers, and workers. Focus group participants suggested the following ways of approaching agency planning, administration, information management, and delivery of specific services.

Planning

- Identify attainable long- and short-term goals and establish a means to measure results (9);
- Make the agency truly responsive to employers and have them drive it (5);

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- Evaluate existing workforce development and support services and continue offering the services that are most successful (3);
- Develop consensus about the design of an integrated workforce development and support agency among key agents of change representing major stakeholders in the workforce development process—employers, educators, parents, social service providers, local elected officials, economic developers, and other community leaders (4); and
- Develop a structure, mechanism, and forum for communication, program development, and resource sharing among and between the organizations associated with workforce development and support—educational institutions, businesses, labor unions, civic organizations, and social service agencies (29).

Administration

- Create a clearinghouse for sharing resources—human, material, information, technology, etc. (6);
- Provide information about sources of funding for workforce development and support programs (1);
- Appoint a single leader to administer resources and coordinate the activities of groups addressing workforce development issues (3);
- Integrate workforce development and support services, clearly define new roles and responsibilities, and provide training to agency staff members (4); and
- Simplify information about and access to agency services (2).

Information management

The workforce development and support agency will make the best possible use of information technologies to provide user-friendly access to public data; collect and disseminate local information; and enhance the efficiency of service delivery. Focus group participants described a system that will:

- Collect, link and make easily accessible accurate information about local job openings, available workers, and training resources (3);
- Obtain labor market information and make it available in user-friendly form to schools and colleges *via* the Internet (3);
- Collect and match information about work experience opportunities offered by employers and the need for work experience placements on the part of schools and colleges (2); and
- Maintain, link, and track records of agency clients and contacts with other organizations associated with workforce development and support (1).

Services

- Serve as an accurate, efficient employment agency, matching local job openings with local job-seekers (5);

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- Assess training and support needs of job-seekers and develop customized plans to help them obtain and retain employment (3);
- Use media to provide information about labor force issues and training and support resources (including the One-Stop Career Center) available in the community (5);
- Attract targeted types of skilled workers to the area (2); and
- Find qualified persons for entry-level, industry-specific jobs who will later fill management roles (1).

4.5.5 National, State, and Local Policies

Focus group participants agree that changes in existing policies and programs and development of innovative policies and programs at national, state, and local levels are necessary to foster the development of truly integrated workforce development and support systems in American communities. The wide range of suggestions they made are associated with *legislative and regulatory barriers* to development of an integrated workforce development and support system; *policy changes* necessary to support employment and reduce poverty; and policy-based *incentives* designed to involve employers, educators, and labor unions in the workforce development and support system. These suggestions are summarized below.

Legislative and regulatory barriers to system integration

- Current federal and state program guidelines and funding allocations create barriers to integrated administration and service delivery at regional and local levels (2);
- Inconsistent and overlapping geographical districting and service responsibilities must be rationalized to improve both service delivery and cost-efficiency (1);
- To encourage employers to offer work experience opportunities, liability issues must be addressed (4); and
- Change regulations that inhibit the education of special populations, such as ex-prisoners (1).

Policy changes

- Implement school funding reform (1);
- Make rehabilitation of prisoners (including vocational training) official state policy (1); and
- Develop policies to support employment and employed people, including raising the minimum wage to a level which covers necessities for people working the standard 40-hour week (3).

Incentives

- Develop tax- and non-tax-based incentives at state and local levels for employers and unions to participate in workforce development—one participant suggested initiating an "Enterprise Employer" program like federal "Enterprise/Empowerment Zones" (4).

Participants in focus groups recognized the need for radical changes in area workforce development and support service provision. They were interested in participating in planning and implementing changes. Finally, they were prepared to commit resources to change initiatives. Their enthusiasm, expertise, and resiliency will be valuable assets to development of an integrated workforce development and support system in Central Illinois.

4.6 Developing an Integrated Workforce Development and Support System: Learning from Best Practice

There is consensus that the workforce development and support system serving Central Illinois residents should do the following things:

- integrate theoretical and skills-based learning throughout the elementary and secondary educational curricula;
- offer workplace-based learning experience to all high school and college students;
- generate high school and college graduates who are ready to work and have the necessary skills to do available jobs;
- increase high school graduation rates and participation in postsecondary programs—particularly among minority and at-risk youth;
- provide comprehensive education, training, and employment support resources and services for area adults;
- integrate publicly provided workforce development and support services;
- develop an increased market among employers, educators, students, and other residents for publicly provided workforce development and support services; and
- forge strong links among all providers of workforce development and support services.

How can planners implement changes in current workforce development and support provision that will help achieve these goals?

One approach is to learn from the literature regarding best practice. This literature takes the form of futurism—projections and interpretations based on current and past data; evaluations of programs implemented elsewhere; and descriptions of models of workforce development and support initiatives. It enables consideration of various scenarios and options. The following discussion will address the issues of organization and planning; administration; and resources. The bibliography at the end of this section includes publications that describe and evaluate model programs, characteristics of which could be adapted for application in Central Illinois.

4.6.1 Organization and Planning

Who should be involved in planning the workforce development and support system? Experts agree that leadership must come from the top. At state level, governors are key to developing structures and allocating resources for change. At regional or community level:

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Mayors and county executives are probably the persons best positioned to spearhead the local system-building task . . . . The networks spawned by integrated service systems become the vehicles for delivering education, job-training opportunities, and linkages with employers. Above all, their success depends on strong leadership—political and otherwise—at the local level.[34]

In addition to political leadership, planning requires participation from all stakeholder organizations and individuals—people who will deliver services, pay for services, use services, and care about whether the system works or not. These people must design a system that will meet local needs. Their investment in system development will help to create a sense of ownership.

According to one recent publication, there are ten major issues that states should consider in revamping their workforce development systems:

1. *Structure and process of design and implementation.* Who should be part of the design process? How will the state make sure that all interests are represented and that the initiative stays on track?
2. *Political environment.* What priority is workforce development? How will support for the initiative be built?
3. *Private sector involvement.* How can the state develop and sustain private sector commitment to the new system? Will special incentives be needed?
4. *Scope of integration*. How broadly should the system be designed? Will it include all education programs, public and private employment and training programs, employer-provided training programs, social services, economic development programs, and income support for people participating in training or employment activities?
5. *Regulatory environment*. How will the state ensure that state regulations promote rather than discourage integration?
6. *Financing issues*. How will the state finance the system so that service providers and program planners can be assured of a reasonably predictable level of funding from year to year?
7. *Portability*. How will the state ensure that customers (both individuals and employers) can move within and among labor markets and access a similar level and type of service?
8. *Accountability*. How will the state know if the system is working? How will success be measured and evaluated?[35]

While community and regional groups are unable to dictate state policies, on the local level they face many of the same challenges states encounter in creating workforce development and support systems.

4.6.2 Administration

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[34] A Generation of Challenge, op.cit., p. 9.
[35] Quoted and paraphrased from McCarthy and Lashman, op.cit., pp. 19-21.

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How can coordination of many disparate programs and services be achieved to reach the ultimate goals of supporting the transitions from school to school, school to work, and work to work? At the heart of this challenge is a publicly funded and administered organization serving as an information clearinghouse, direct service provider, and link between the needs of a wide range of clients and services offered by a variety of other local providers. How should this organization be constructed?

According to a major new report, Creating Workforce Development Systems that Work: An Evaluation of the Initial One-Stop Implementation Experience (1997), factors contributing to successful development of One-Stops include:

- A strong history of collaboration among local workforce development programs prior to the One-Stop initiative.
- A state One-Stop design that provides clear guidelines for local One-Stop systems but also allows local One-Stop partners substantial discretion to tailor One-Stop systems to local needs.
- Continued active involvement over time by a broad range of state and local planning partners in ongoing planning and oversight of the evolving One-Stop system.
- The involvement of direct service staff from participating agencies in the planning of shared facilities and consolidated services over an extended planning period prior to opening the One-Stop center.
- Formal planning linkages between the One-Stop initiative and school-to-work and welfare-to-work systems at both the state and local level.
- An attractive, accessible physical facility that supports both a flexible customer flow and frequent interaction among staff of partnering agencies.
- The ability of One-Stop staff from different agencies to exchange relevant information and communicate via electronic mail on a regular basis.
- Careful attention to the capacity building needs of One-Stop managers and local staff to help prepare them to deliver integrated customer services.[36]

According to another discussion of publicly supported training services:

In a recent survey, administrators of state employment and training programs listed those activities they felt were most effective in promoting interagency cooperation. Among the most popular techniques were improved communication and information-sharing among agencies; interdepartmental liaisons and interagency task forces; uniform planning periods; joint funding of programs; establishment of electronic client service system; universal eligibility and referral mechanisms; and development of consolidated application forms.[37]

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[36] Creating Workforce Development Systems That Work: An Evaluation of the Initial One-Stop Implementation Experience, Social Policy Research Associates, Submitted to the US Department of Labor August 15, 1997, p. ES-2.
[37] Liddell and Ashley-Oehm, op.cit., p. 9.

Key to success of a local or regional workforce development center is changing the image of publicly provided employment support services and meeting the needs of a broad spectrum of community residents.

4.6.3 Resources

There is general consensus that integration of service depends upon integration of resources—a major challenge if the only resources considered are federally allocated funds for administration of specific programs addressing the needs of specific populations. Traditional educational programs are comparatively well funded. However, this resource does not address the needs of the 75 percent of people who, in the year 2000, will be out of school and either not in the labor force or on the job. Funding mechanisms must be found to support services for adults who are not part of the formal educational system.

Several alternative ways to harness funds to support workforce development services for out-of-school, out-of-work young people are suggested by David Gruber:

> At the same time that cuts in traditional funding sources, such as JTPA, have undermined long-standing programs, increased flexibility in spending has begun to allow communities to tap into dollars that flow to much larger institutions that serve young people. By leveraging funds from schools, community colleges, housing authorities, and welfare and other systems, communities can begin to create a new and larger resource pool for out-of-school youth.

Gruber suggests using:
- K-12 average daily attendance funding by re-enrolling young people who have dropped out of school in appropriately designed programs;
- Federal Pell grants to create links from GED to postsecondary programs;
- Juvenile Justice Resources to train young people rather than house them in correctional facilities;
- federal public housing dollars to support education and training at housing sites; and
- welfare block grant funds to pay for workforce readiness, training, and support services.[38]

Another study addresses the issue of financing skills training for adult workers. The authors write, "It has been estimated that American firms spend at least $30 billion a year to train their employees, though 90 percent of this amount is spent by only about 0.5 percent of firms (about 15,000 companies). In addition, two-thirds of all corporate training goes toward upgrading the skills of managers, technicians, and other highly educated employees." Thus, the training does not get where it is needed most. The authors discuss several innovative examples of ways training can be funded:

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[38] David Gruber, "Creative Resource Development: An Assessment of Potential in Selected Cities," in <u>A Generation of Challenge</u>, <u>op.cit</u>., pp. 87-89.

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- In an arrangement co-sponsored by AT&T, the Communications Workers of America, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, a training fund was established and supported by employer payments taken from funds that would otherwise go for wages, pensions, or other benefits. Contributions range from five cents per worker-hour to 19 cents per worker hour.
- Alternatively, states can develop programs to mandate or encourage employer investment in training. California's Employment Training Panel funds programs by means of an employment training tax equal to 0.1 percent of a firms unemployment insurance tax rate—a surtax that generates more than $100 million per year.
- The Alabama Income Tax Credit is offered to businesses that provide basic skills education to employees who have worked at least 24 hours per week for at least 16 weeks.
- The Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Act enables community colleges to "sell certificates to investors on behalf of businesses. These certificates are similar to public bonds used to raise money for capital improvement projects such as schools. Training services are then tailored to meet the individual needs of each participating business."
- Illinois's Workplace Literacy Grant program, the only state initiative that funds basic skills training, offers businesses matching grants based on appropriated funds to provide training at worksites.
- Illinois's Prairie State 2000 Authority "provides grants and loans to qualifying businesses to retrain workers in new technologies."[39]

The key to finding new resources for workforce development is creation of broad-based agreement that education, training, and employment support services are of primary importance to economic development and prosperity.

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[39] Liddell and Ashley-Oehm, op.cit., pp. 6, 7, 10, 11.

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5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary conclusion emerging from this research is that the future success and prosperity of the study area requires that every current and potential worker perform at the highest possible skill level. This means that workforce development is everyone's job—not just that of school and college teachers. Parents must learn about educational and career options and encourage their children to participate and excel. Civic and religious organizations must work with employers, schools, and social agencies to support the training and employment of area residents. Employers and trade unions must jettison their traditionally adversarial relationship to meet their common goals of producing skilled workers for long-term good employment. Above all, both young people and adults must come to see learning and career development as life-long opportunities and responsibilities.

All partners in the workforce development and support process must evaluate and revamp the way they do things. Educational curricula and assessment standards must be overhauled to integrate theoretical and work skills-based knowledge and employers must be involved in composing and delivering instruction. Teachers at all grade levels must be trained to include careers and job-skills information in all types of classroom activities. The barrier between school and workplace must be dissolved so that young people have broad understanding of available careers, feel welcome in workplaces, and have a variety of work experience before they enter the workforce.

Resources and facilities for training and employment support must be easily accessible to area adults. All efforts must be made to create flexible and friendly learning opportunities that meet the needs of specific populations. Training must be available both within and outside of workplaces to upgrade skills of workers. Furthermore, successful methods must be found to attract adults who are not currently employed into educational and training programs that allow them to qualify for rewarding skilled employment.

Employers must provide clear and reliable information about the specific skills and qualifications necessary to be hired in area occupations. They must use the most efficient ways of advertising job openings and screening potential candidates. They must also work with social agencies to support the transportation, child care, and elder care needs of workers. In addition, they must be prepared to pay workers a living wage and offer a full range of benefits.

Labor unions must be prepared to increase their involvement in education and training. With long-term experience in delivering high quality, skills-based instruction, unions have a wealth of expertise to offer the planning and implementation efforts necessary to establish a new workforce development and support system. Furthermore, their own programs could be expanded to involve more area young people. Unions must be prepared to work with employers, educators, social service agencies, and other partners to reach common goals.

Workplace development agencies must expand their perspectives and roles beyond traditional needy populations. In meeting the requirements of employers, educational

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institutions, students, job-seekers, and workers they will both serve their more traditional client base and support community economic development.

The following specific recommendations emerge from project research:

- Workforce development and support system planners should think in terms of a regional "community"—*not* in terms of more narrow municipal, county, or service area interests.
- Planning must address the special and different needs of rural and inner city residents.
- Existing workforce development programs should be formally evaluated. Emerging information should be used to improve or cut programs and enable new initiatives to be designed on the basis of "what works."
- All possible media—newspapers, television, radio, Internet—should be used to inform the public about area labor force issues and generate support for the development and utilization of the integrated workforce development and support system.
- This report must be used to support the needs of system planners and service providers. The Executive Summary and *Central Illinois Workforce Development Guide* should be widely disseminated.
- Employers, educators, local government officials, public agency staff members, economic developers, and other area leaders who participated in project research should be recruited to undertake specific responsibilities associated with development of a collaborative, integrated workforce development and support system.
- A clearinghouse for workforce development and support services should be established. Making the best possible use of information technologies, this clearinghouse should match customers with services, house and track interagency data, and facilitate communication among all stakeholders in workforce development and support service delivery.
- A single workforce development entity should be established to coordinate the activities of school-to-work, welfare-to-work, and other workforce development initiatives in the study area. This entity should be empowered to make creative and productive use of area resources to support innovative collaborative projects.
- Employers must communicate actual labor force needs to the Department of Employment Security. Current public data underestimate the demand for Information Technology workers.

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