



**WEI** | WORKFORCE  
EQUITY  
INITIATIVE  
**SYMPOSIUM**

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES TO  
ADVANCE WORKFORCE EQUITY

**WELCOME ADDRESS**

# Symposium Welcome

Dr. Brian Durham, Executive Director  
Illinois Community College Board





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**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

# Closing the Equity Gap

## Important Role of Illinois Community Colleges



**WORKFORCE EQUITY INITIATIVE**

# Keynote Speakers

Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth, IL 92<sup>nd</sup> District  
Jennifer K. Foster, IL Community College Board



# Advocacy & Support for WEI

**Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth**  
*Speaker Pro-Tempore*  
*Chief Budgeteer*  
*State House District 92*



**WORKFORCE EQUITY INITIATIVE**

# Background on the Initiative

Providing high-skill, high-wage outcomes for underrepresented individuals living in poverty

WORKFORCE EQUITY INITIATIVE

# Collective Impact Approach to Building African American and Community Vitality

- Targeted colleges with Disproportionately Impacted Areas of Poverty
- Supported expansion of training programs that secure pathways to economic vitality
- Impacted over 9,000 Illinois residents to date





# The Need for High-Skilled Credentials

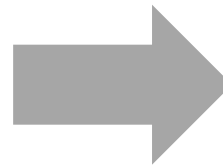
## Increasing Poverty and Decreasing Population

High skill credentials have been the only effective method for freeing families from generational poverty while supplying employers with the required workforce.



### NOW

For IL, 51% of adults have a high-skilled post-secondary credential.



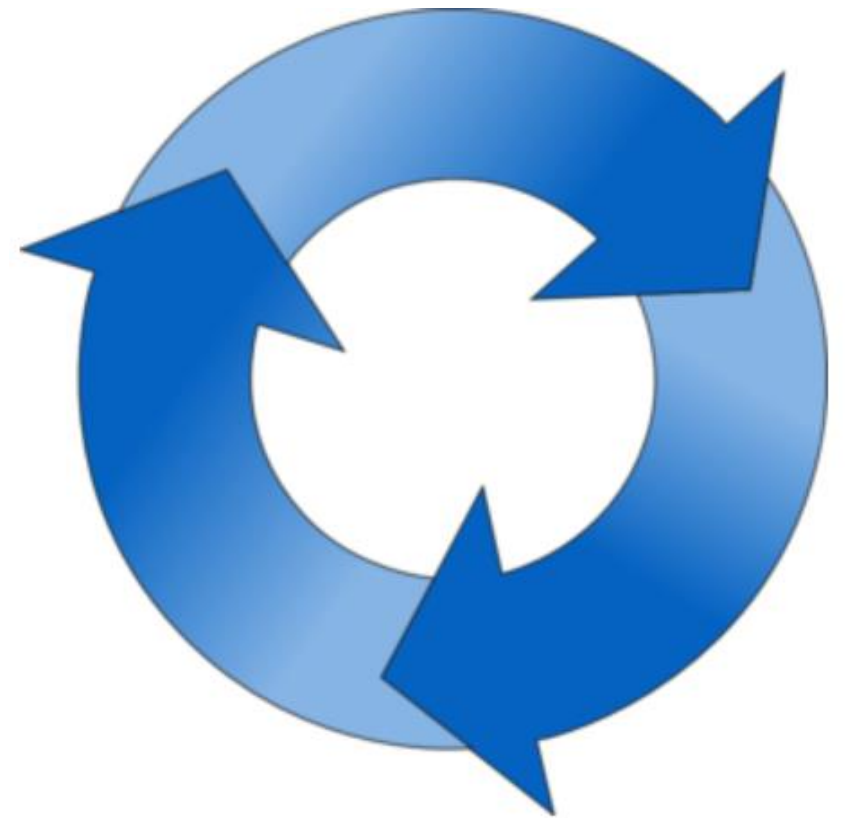
### NEED

Generally, 65% of jobs in Illinois require a credential past high school.

# Addressing the Poverty Cycle

- 49% of Illinois adults no post-secondary credential
- Multiple part-time jobs w/ no benefits
- No family-sustaining wages
- No pathway out of poverty
- Family and economic turmoil

**All While Experiencing Record  
Workforce Gaps**



# African American Community Need

- African Americans – lowest employment and credential outcomes
- Multigenerational Poverty Trend
- High Violence and Incarceration Rates
- Little Hope

**Labor force participation, 2019**

White Illinoisans:

**82%**

Black Illinoisans:

**69%**

**Unemployment rates, 2020 Q2\***

White Illinoisans:

**13%**

Black Illinoisans:

**21%**

\*Disparities in unemployment rates pre-date COVID, but have been further exacerbated by the pandemic.

Source: IDES

# Policy Strategy

- WEI was co-designed with ILBC, ICCB, and ICC
- Community Colleges as workforce solutions delivery system
- \$18 million annual investment for last 4 years to demonstrate Community Colleges can meet African Americans and people of poverty where they are to complete credentials and earn full-time benefited jobs paying 30% above the regional living wage or on the pathway.

**The investment is paying off and changing lives!**

# Community Colleges as Community Changers

- Thank you to the WEI Colleges
- Tremendous equity impact
- Community Colleges are the workforce development and equity equalizers in the state of Illinois
- Will continue to be your advocate!

*Let's Hear from WEI Students!*



The background of the slide features a light blue map of Illinois. A green gear icon is positioned over the northern part of the state, symbolizing industry or workforce. The text 'WWEI' is written in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font.

**WWEI**

WORKFORCE  
EQUITY  
INITIATIVE

The ICCB logo consists of a blue outline of the state of Illinois. The letters 'ICCB' are written in a large, bold, black serif font across the middle of the state outline. Below the outline, the full name 'ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD' is written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font.

**ICCB**  
ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD

# Impact and Success Outcomes

*Jennifer K. Foster*  
*Deputy Executive Director*  
*ICCB*



# ICCB BOARD GOALS

## *ACCESS & EQUITY*

- ❖ GOAL 1: Support minority, first generation, and low-income students across urban, rural, and suburban communities, through the promotion of evidence-based best practices that results in system wide improvement of equity metrics that reduce equity gaps.

## *SEAMLESS TRANSITION*

- ❖ GOAL 2: Support a seamless transition for students into and through postsecondary education and the workforce by fostering system engagement and equitable access and outcomes for these students.

## *ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT*

- ❖ GOAL 3: Contribute to economic development by supporting the Illinois community college system's effort to provide robust workforce training, to expand apprenticeships, to increase credential attainment, to build quality career pathways, and to address the future needs of the Illinois workforce.



# 18 Participating Colleges – WEI Consortium

- **College of Lake County**
- **Heartland Community College**
- **Illinois Central College**
- **Kaskaskia College**
- **Kennedy King College**
- **Lincoln Land Community College**
- **Malcolm X College**
- **Oakton Community College**
- **Olive-Harvey College**
- **Parkland College**
- **Prairie State College**
- **Richard J. Daley College**
- **Richland Community College**
- **Rock Valley College**
- **South Suburban College**
- **Southwestern Illinois College**
- **Triton College**
- **Wilbur Wright College**

*\*Note: Joliet Junior College Participated 20-21*

# WEI Desired Outcomes



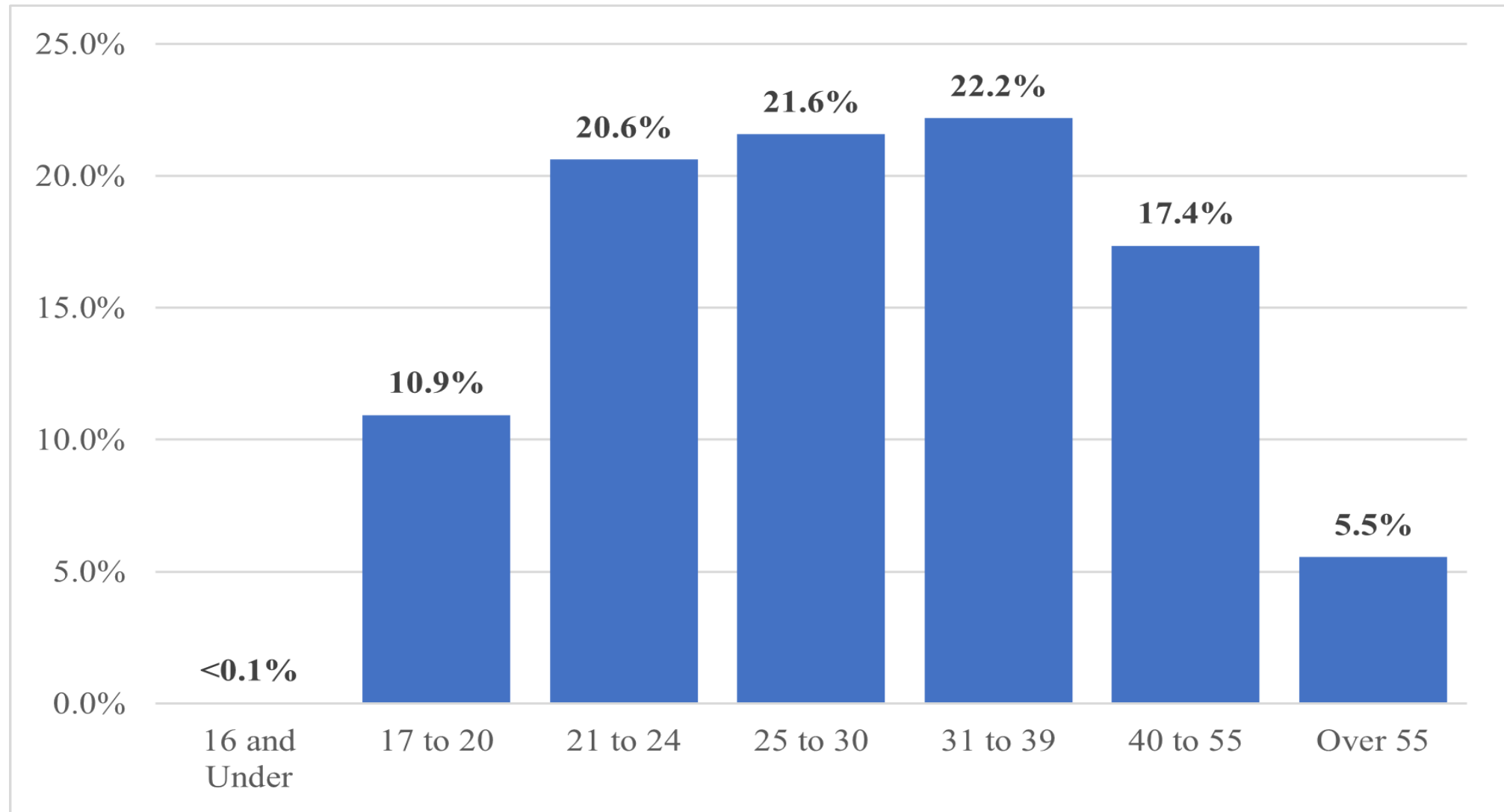
Rock Valley College Student – Interview Attire

- **Accelerate the time to completion**
  - to enter and succeed in post-secondary education/training programs
- **Employment after completion**
  - paying at least 30% above the regional living wage or on a pathway to a family sustaining wage.
  - in high skilled, high wage, and in-demand occupations.

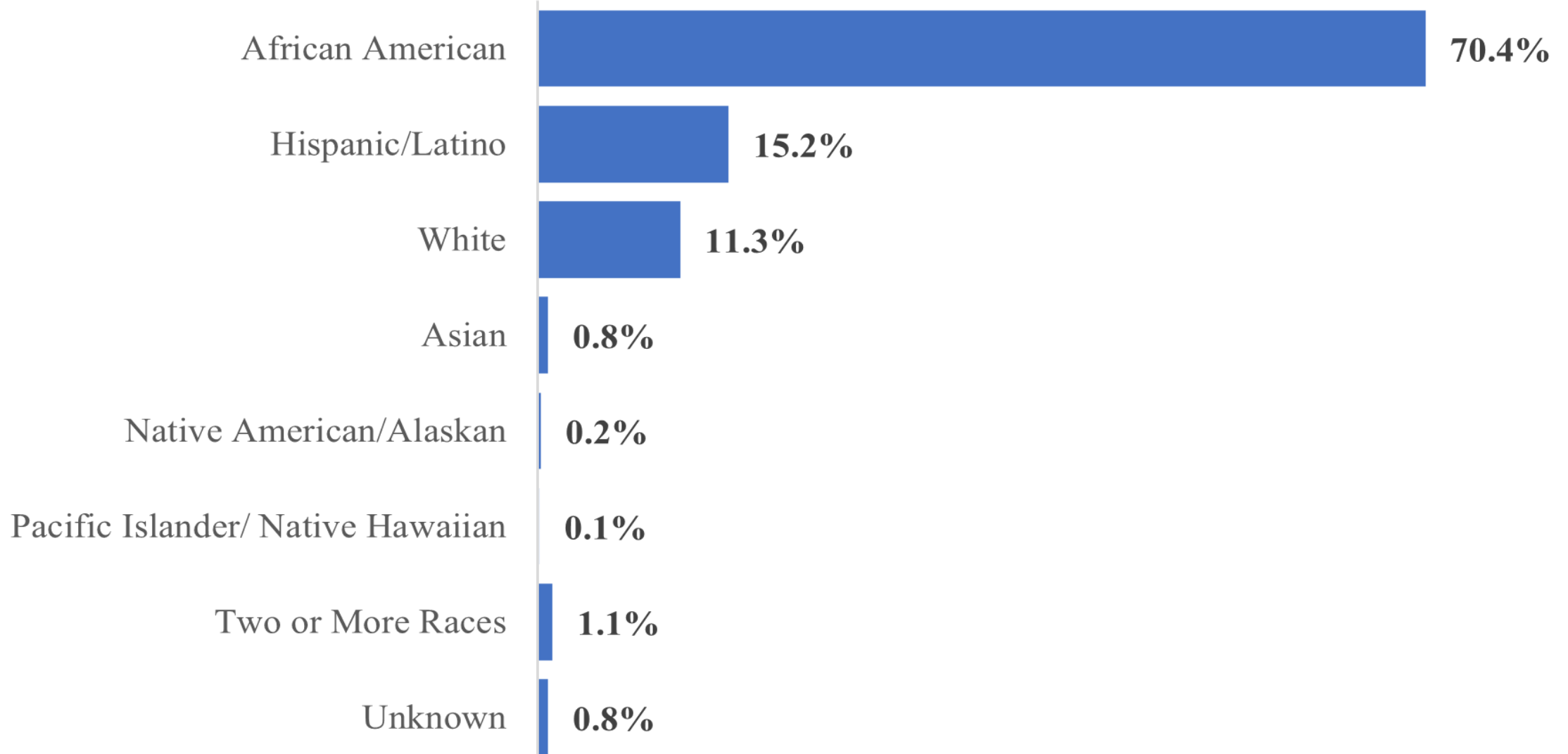
# Three-Year Success Outcomes for Illinois

<b>Consortium Metrics Targets (60%) Listed</b>	<b>FY20 Results (at closeout)</b>	<b>FY21 Results (at closeout)</b>	<b>FY22 In Progress (will end 6/30/23)</b>
<b>Enrolled Participants</b>	<b>3,209</b>	<b>3,323</b>	<b>3,126</b>
<b>Credentials</b>	<b>2,526</b>	<b>3,613</b>	<b>2,851</b>
<b>60% African American Students</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>73%</b>
<b>60% Completers (at time of report)</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>64%</b>
<b>60% Completers Employed</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Average Hourly Wage</b>	<b>\$17.69</b>	<b>\$20.39</b>	<b>\$20.44</b>
<b>Average Cost Per Student</b>	<b>\$5,565</b>	<b>\$5,227</b>	<b>\$4,417</b>

# WEI Demographics – by age

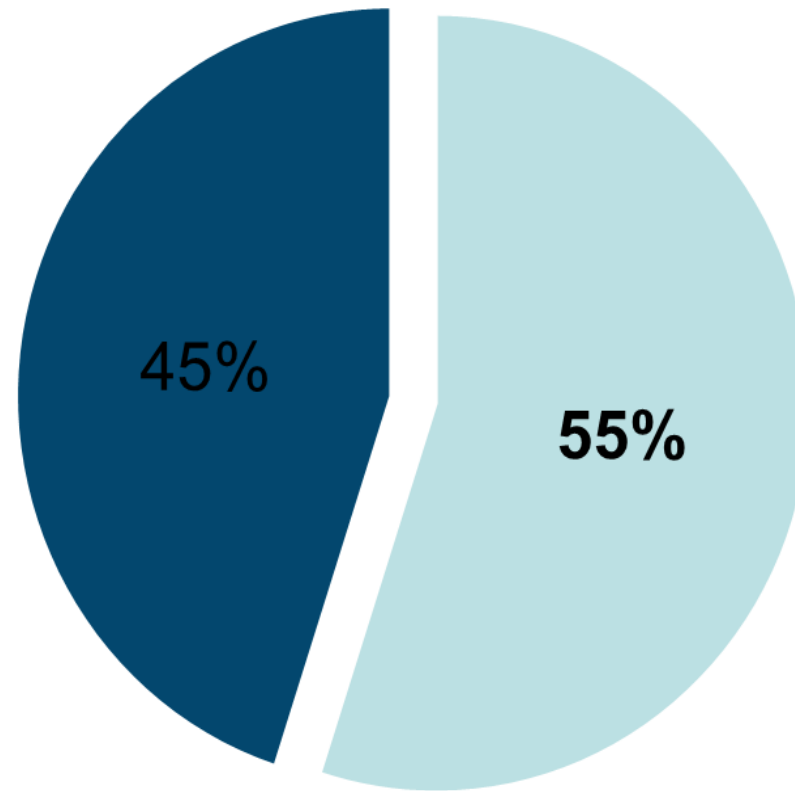


# WEI Demographics – by race/ethnicity



# WEI Demographics

**WEI Students - Female 55% and Male 45%**



■ Female ■ Male

# Enrollment by High Demand Field

*from last year's closeout report*

High Demand Field	Enrollment	African American Enrollment	Credentials Earned
Healthcare	1570	1159	1044
Manufacturing	540	392	1028
Business / Services	451	256	243
Transportation	430	317	428
Construction	180	111	251
Computer Technology	164	111	86
Repair / Installation	63	25	86

# Highest Reported Hourly Wages

- Truck Driving (CDL) - **\$75**
- Cannabis Dispensary - **\$50**
- Overhead Electrical Line - **\$42**
- Welding - **\$39**
- Nursing (LPN, CNA, BNA) - **\$36**
- Diesel Brake/Suspension - **\$35**
- Process Operator Tech - **\$35**
- Supply Chain – **\$35**
- Industrial Skills – **\$34**
- Medical Billing & Coding - **\$30**
- Automotive Tech - **\$29**
- Cybersecurity - **\$29**
- Emergency Medical (EMT) – **\$29**
- Office Assistant / Bookkeeper - **\$29**
- Manufacturing Skills – **\$28**
- HVAC - **\$26**
- Web Development - **\$26**
- EKG Tech - **\$26**
- Patient Care Tech - **\$26**
- Solar Panel Installation - **\$25**



# Key Success Factors / Lessons Learned

- Involves college leadership
- Fosters equity-focused decision making at all levels
- Enhances student services (navigators, specialists)
- Builds capacity for training programs
- **Embeds comprehensive wraparound services**
- Includes referrals for additional community support
- Embraces innovative outreach & marketing
- Targets high demand workforce gap positions
- Eliminates barriers at the institutional level
- Develops employer partnerships
- Requires essential skills training



# Key Success Factors – Technical Partners



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
**Center for Governmental Studies**  
*Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development*

# Addressing the Equity Gap: Future Plans for Illinois Community Colleges

## ➤ ICCB Goals for FY24

- Continued strengthening of employer connections.
- Heightened focus on the most successful program areas connected to the living wage.
- Opportunities for sites to engage directly with one another through communities of practice.
- Expansion opportunities.



# Addressing the Equity Gap: Future Plans for Illinois Community Colleges

## ➤ Equity Planning

### ➤ The ICCB and IBHE are co-facilitators of on Equity Planning Advisory Committee.

- Provide recommendations to the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board on the elements, methods, practices, and strategies to be included in an Illinois Higher Education Equity Plan framework. The framework will be used by public higher education institutions to develop new and expand existing equity efforts and from the data, explore ways in which to close gaps that exist among underrepresented and minoritized groups within their respective institutions.
- The development and release of a framework for Equity Planning (scheduled summer)
- The development and implementation of training for institutions, as they work to implement equity plans.
- The development and implementation of a process to evaluate institutional plans.

### ➤ WEI as a Model for other Grants

### ➤ FY24 WEI Continuation Plans

## Table Talk – Reflection Questions for Discussion at Your Tables

- At your organization (college, company, or agency), what are some of the most successful strategies that you have in place to address closing the equity gap? Share ways that you recruit, retain, advance African Americans and other low-income populations.
- Which equity initiatives at your organization are causing the greatest impact / institutional change?



## **In Closing...**

**If we all row in the same direction, we will not only change the trajectory of individual lives, but also that of their families, while growing the workforce, businesses and increasing economic vitality.**

*Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth  
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*Jennifer Foster, ICCB  
Jennifer.Foster@illinois.gov*



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OLDER, YOU MAY  
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WORKFORCE EQUITY INITIATIVE  
**COMPILATION VIDEO**