

# IL Skills for Good Jobs Agenda

2024

Legislative  
Platform



A prosperous, inclusive economy in Illinois requires promoting policies that support all workers' career aspirations and unique pathways, creating jobs with family-sustaining wages, and boosting local businesses. Illinois must invest in job creation strategies that include education and skills training to meet the accelerating change in skills demands. These strategies are key to combating historical disinvestment and will build the foundation for a skilled workforce ready to meet a changing economy, an equitable workforce development system where all individuals can thrive through employment, and increased racial, gender, and economic equity.

# 4 Workforce Policy Pillars for Illinois

Here's what we can do in the 2024 ILGA:



**Dedicate Illinois resources and allocate federal resources to workforce development using a racial and gender equity lens.**

- Dedicate and increase State funding to programs that support employer and provider training partnerships, like the Job Training and Economic Development Program (JTED)
- Require that every state investment in job creation – whether in infrastructure, clean energy, or public health – invest in workforce, skills training, and small business development that is equitable and accessible.
- Devote revenue from the Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) Program to support job training and workforce development in a variety of sectors with a racial and gender equity lens.
- Allocate discretionary federal funding dollars to workforce development to train and re-skill the Illinois workforce.
- Increase DCEO Office of Employment & Training special line item for IWIB innovation funding from \$5M in FY24 to \$10M in FY25.



**Promote policies that eliminate structural employment barriers disproportionately faced by people of color, foreign-born workers, returning citizens, people with disabilities, women, and young people in Illinois.**

- Support IL Clean Slate, which would provide for automatic sealing of past arrests and convictions for a wide range of charges. Over 3 million Illinoisans have an arrest or conviction record. This record follows people and exposes them to over 1,000 permanent punishment laws, even if they've never been convicted of a crime. These permanent punishments prevent people from finding good jobs, housing, education, and other basic needs. Clean Slate will automate the records relief process in Illinois, eliminating court backlogs, creating new opportunities for Illinoisans, and removing barriers for qualified individuals to get well-paying jobs.
- Support HB277/ SB3700, Failure to Appear Act which would eliminate driver's license suspensions for failure to appear in traffic court. Driver's licenses are vital for employment. Ending the practice of suspending driver's licenses will ensure the employment and wellbeing of Illinois residents, particularly Black and Latino people who face systemic barriers to employment, and disparities in the labor market.

# Here's what we can do in the 2024 ILGA:

- Support Paid Family and Medical Leave, which keeps workers attached to their jobs and the workforce when they have to take time off to care for themselves or their family members. It helps small businesses stay competitive by helping them attract and retain talent. Evidence shows that paid leave leads to a wealth of benefits related to child development, child and caregiver health, and caregiver educational attainment and career development.
- Support HB 4500 / SB 2864, Truth and Accuracy in Offense Titles, which would create truth and accuracy in Illinois' weapons possession statutes by renaming "use" to "possession." It will make these name changes retroactively so individuals who have faced bias for years because of their records can start to move forward. Most people reading criminal history would think Unlawful Use of Weapons (UW) and Armed Habitual Criminal (AHC) indicate far more dangerous activity than the simple possession charges they actually are. These misleading offense titles unfairly impact people's ability to secure housing and employment.
- Support Cannabis Equity by ensuring qualified individuals are not denied the ability to become a principal officer or agent of a cannabis business establishment on the sole basis of a criminal conviction. Cannabis Equity would standardize and streamline the online application and badging process for prospective workers.
- Support HB 3418, Safer Communities Act which would provide wage subsidies for businesses that hire formerly incarcerated individuals and an increased tax credit for small businesses that hire returning citizens, support small businesses struggling to hire employees, foster opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals, improve public safety, and reduce the costs of incarceration.



**Ensure that no Illinoisan – regardless of race, gender, age, or nationality – lives in poverty by promoting good jobs and strong community supports.**

- Increase the investment in the Monetary Award Program (MAP) and continue to build it back to the purchasing power it once had so that people's full tuition and fees are covered when they're attending public college or university.
- Enact a full and fair wage for tipped workers.
- Create a state-based Child Tax Credit for Illinoisans.
- Support HB4912, the Human Services Equitable Pay Act, which would advance pay equity for the Human Service Sector in IL. The bill seeks to eliminate the pay disparity that exists between the salaries of human service professionals across the sector, and establish a Human Services Compensation Taskforce to provide recommendations for workforce recruitment and retention.
- Support HB4601/ SB3082, which would create the Human Service Professional Loan Repayment Program to address the human service workforce crisis that directly impacts communities across Illinois. The program provides loan repayment assistance to qualified human services professionals to recruit and retain them to work in community-based human services organizations.

# Here's what we can do in the 2024 ILGA:

- Support HB5064/ SB3457, the Community Partner Fair Contracting Act, which would address the undue administrative burden health and human service providers face when contracting with the state of Illinois. This omnibus bill will include provisions to improve and address timely contracts and payments to providers, expand and clarify advanced payment eligibility, cover the full cost of delivering services, and expedite and simplify the Court of Claims process.
- Support HB5071/ SB3464, Work without Fear Act, which would prohibit immigrant based retaliation from employers threatening to investigate and report their immigration status when speaking out against workers rights' violations. This act would also expand protections for workers who report sexual harassment or file complaints outside of official channels.
- Ensure a vibrant U.S. workforce where newcomers, immigrants, refugees, and asylees are welcomed, included, and fully able to contribute to the economy, their communities, and our shared future. We need to simplify the process by which English Language Learners, most of whom are immigrants and newcomers into our country, receive access to vital services, including those provided through Adult Education. Adequate bilingual supports are necessary and working with community-based organizations is key.



**Increase research, data sharing, and transparency across state agencies that touch education and workforce training to identify and address equity gaps in our public investments.**

- Support the establishment in legislation of a Chief Workforce Officer (CWO). The CWO would lead, oversee, and set strategic goals for all state and federal workforce programs administered by state agencies while driving and monitoring those outcomes. Centering the state's jobseekers and workforce development system users, the CWO would identify rules, policies and/or procedures that create unnecessary steps in accessing system services and dismantle barriers across the system to allow more time for actual service delivery. The CWO would coordinate cross-agency and be responsible for educating and acting as a resource for state and federal policy makers. They would use an equity lens and any available racial, gender, and socio-economic impact assessments in the development of policy decisions.
- Support the expansion and integration of the state's longitudinal data system to include all education, workforce, public benefits, and labor market agency data.
- Support HB1237/ SB2032, which would create the Illinois Strategic Action Plan for Aging Equity Act, a planning commission to develop a strategic action plan on aging equity for Illinois. The commission would be co-led by the Governor's Office and the Department on Aging to research and develop a long-term strategy that would plan for aging equity from across sectors. This includes addressing workforce issues, including: shortages, turnover, and work conditions; career paths, and professional credentialing for home care/direct support workers, healthcare and gerontological careers and services, as well as addressing working caregivers' needs and improving opportunities for older workers.