



# An Equitable Jobs Platform for the Next Governor of Illinois

By many economic indicators, the Illinois economy is strong. However, digging deeper into the data reveals that not everyone benefits from growth. In the 3rd quarter of FY2017, the overall unemployment rate in Illinois was 4.9%. However, among Black Illinois residents, unemployment rates clocked in at 10.1% - a rate more than twice as high as White Illinoisans. Our state's Black unemployment rate is the highest in the nation. Furthermore, just having any job does not necessarily chart a path out of poverty. Almost a third of people in Illinois are poor or low-income, particularly among women, children, and people of color.

Many of our state's policies contribute to these shameful statistics, and it will be up to the next Governor to reverse this trend by ramping up our investment in marginalized job seekers. Our immediate priorities are:

<p>Remove systemic barriers to employment.</p>	<p><b>Sign the License to Work Act.</b> 50,000 Illinoisans have their driver's license suspended each year not because they are bad drivers, but because they can't afford to pay debts. Since 80% of Illinoisans drive to work, a suspended license can mean missing out on critical employment opportunities. The License to Work Act would end the practice of suspending licenses for most non-moving violations, creating a road back to work for thousands of people.</p>
	<p><b>Support efforts to remove employment barriers for people with criminal convictions.</b> Involvement with the criminal justice system should not result in a life sentence of exclusion from employment.</p>
<p>Invest in career pathways that focus on the most marginalized job seekers.</p>	<p><b>Develop a skills-based strategy to help job-seeking SNAP recipients find career pathways.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the SNAP Employment &amp; Training (E&amp;T) Program "voluntary" in Illinois, in order to:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure no one goes hungry when they are looking for work or in an unstable job; and</li> <li>○ Use limited resources for skill-building services, not administrative monitoring.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Expand the state's SNAP E&amp;T services by leveraging federal "50-50" matching funds to increasing education, training, work experience, and support services.</li> <li>• Apply for a time-limit waiver for all eligible counties in Illinois.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Dedicate state funds towards innovative workforce development strategies that build on Illinois' career pathways infrastructure.</b> Illinois should establish a \$25 million line-item to support evidence-based workforce development innovation and systems alignment specifically focused on reducing long-term unemployment for the most disconnected job seekers.</p>
	<p><b>1% for Workforce!</b> Dedicate 1% of all capital and economic development dollars towards increasing access to job training and workforce and reducing gender and race disparities in employment. Taking this approach would continue a pattern of equitable, growth-focused investment seen in the Urban Weatherization Initiative and Future Energy Jobs Act.</p>
	<p><b>Boldly oppose the federally proposed "public charge" rules</b> that discourage legal immigrants from seeking skills training, education, and supportive services that help them succeed.</p>
<p>Ensure that every job in Illinois is a good job.</p>	<p><b>Fight for a living wage for all workers.</b> Start by raising the statewide minimum wage.</p>
	<p><b>Eliminate the sub-minimum wage</b> for tipped workers in Illinois.</p>
	<p>Support legislation that aims to <b>protect the rights of victims of workplace sexual harassment.</b></p>
<p>Fight for sustainable, equitable revenue streams.</p>	<p><b>Champion a Fair Tax in Illinois in 2019.</b> Stable state revenue is the foundation of public investments that help communities thrive. Progressive tax reform would help redistribute the gains of a growing economy from the wealthiest to those most in need of support.</p>

**Together, we can build a state in which everyone can access employment as a pathway out of poverty.**

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