Constructing a Strong Foundation on which to Build:

SkillsUSA Illinois Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Landscape Analysis

January 2025

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SkillsUSA ILLINOIS
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Please cite this report as:

Klein, J., Richard, B., & Foil, J. (2025). Constructing a Strong Foundation on which to Build: SkillsUSA Illinois Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Landscape Analysis. *Northern Illinois University: P-20 Research & Data Collaborative.*

Constructing a Strong Foundation on which to Build:

SkillsUSA Illinois Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Landscape Analysis

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At the request of SkillsUSA Illinois, a research team composed of experts with both research and practical experience from the Illinois P-20 Network and the Workforce Policy Lab at Northern Illinois University's (NIU) Center for Governmental Studies conducted a comprehensive landscape analysis. This effort, part of the NIU P-20 Research and Data Collaborative, examined the state of apprenticeships, internships, and work-based learning across various industries and communities throughout Illinois.

This study is based on existing governmental data and a critical statewide survey of businesses and community partners who host apprentices and other aspects of work-based learning as well as a survey of school districts, community colleges, and other educational organizations. The goal of the study is to provide a comprehensive overview of apprenticeships, internships, and other forms of work-based learning across Illinois, where these opportunities are located, the types of career fields they encompass, and the demographics of current apprentices and interns.

The research report first provides a strong background on the policies and practices currently in place across Illinois that impact apprenticeships, internships, and work-based learning before diving into this new and novel research. After offering greater context regarding this study as well as outlining the data collection process, the data analysis of both governmental data and original survey data is included in detail.

Highlights from the detailed data presentation reveal several key trends in apprenticeships. While apprenticeships continue to be offered primarily in Construction and Installation, Maintenance, and Repair, there has been growth in other occupations, which increased from 19% of all apprenticeships in 2019 to 25% in 2024. The diversity of individuals in apprenticeships also improved, rising from only 26% of apprentices in 2019 being non-white to 46% in 2024. At the same time, female participation in apprenticeships remains low at 14% of all apprentices despite women comprising 50% of the workforce. Additionally, it is worth noting that apprenticeships for female and non-white individuals continue to center on occupations with lower earnings potential.

The ISBE work-based learning course enrollment data demonstrated that patterns in which the number of work-based learning courses offered by schools varies widely and is not currently related to school district adequacy level and only related in a small way to school size. Schools with a Locale of Suburban (which exists in areas throughout Illinois and not just in Chicagoland or the Metro East) do offer significantly more work-based learning courses than schools with a locale of town or rural.

The data demonstrated that comparatively few students in Illinois are exposed to apprenticeships or internships. Patterns in which these types of opportunities exist do continue to emphasize positions in the health sciences, human and public service, and manufacturing, engineering, technology, and trades, which all have identified areas of workforce shortages. There continues to be a need for additional apprenticeship and internship opportunities in many areas, including agriculture, food, and natural resources as well as information technology. Likewise, there is a continued need for support of efforts to develop and implement such programs with both community and business partners and with educational organizations.

One key result of this work was that two new related metrics have been developed for future use in Illinois: Apprenticeship-Enrollment Metric and Internship-Enrollment Metric. The benefits of these metrics are that:

- They are simple to calculate.
- They allow for easy comparisons within organizations across years and with changes in enrollment.
- They allow for easy comparisons across organizations with vastly different enrollments.
- They can be used as part of efforts to benchmark high-quality apprenticeship and internship programs.

Key themes that emerged from this study included:

- Apprenticeships are changing with increasing diversity across industries and occupations and with increasingly diverse individuals.
- Work-based learning continues to grow with more students experiencing some work-based learning activities and with internships continuing to increase, though a relatively small number of students currently participate in internships or apprenticeships.
- Challenges remain in implementing work-based learning for both business and community partners and for educational organizations.
- Equity gaps persist in internship experiences, with unpaid internships predominating and the need for more equitable participation in internships and apprenticeships that lead to high-wage and in-demand occupations.

The research team also identifies key issues for future consideration that can further unlock the potential of work-based learning in Illinois, improve career readiness and workforce development, strengthen the state's economy, and benefit individuals, their families, and their communities. These key issues are:

- Increase meaningful data collection, and support for meaningful data collection, around career readiness.
- Continued and increased professional development related to apprenticeships and internships.
- Further study of infrastructure around work-based learning in both educational settings and in business and community organizations.

An Overview of this study

At the request of SkillsUSA Illinois, this study has been designed to provide a comprehensive landscape analysis of the state of apprenticeships across industries and communities throughout Illinois specifically as well as in the context of the larger work-based learning framework in Illinois. This study is based on existing governmental data; existing non-governmental data; a critical statewide survey of businesses and community partners who host apprentices, interns, and participate other aspects of work-based learning; as well as a survey of school districts, community colleges, and other educational organizations that focuses on work-based learning in their organizations including their involvement with apprenticeships and internships.

The goal of the study is to provide a comprehensive overview of:

- what apprenticeships exist across Illinois and in what contexts
- what type of internships exist across and in what contexts
- what type of work-based learning opportunities exist across Career Pathways throughout Illinois

This study has utilized available data as well as collecting original data through surveys developed specifically for this study. To assist with survey completion, the research team actively engaged leaders in the field, in educational organizations, commerce and industry, and in the workforce development community with sharing out each survey with its respective target audience of potential respondents.

Additionally, given the originality of this type of comprehensive overview of work-based learning and, specifically apprenticeships and internships, as part of an initial landscape analysis, the research team has sought to identify opportunities for improvement and growth across Illinois with particular regards to data collection for future ongoing analysis related to aspects of work-based learning.

From the outset, the research team has been excited about this opportunity, led by the support of SkillsUSA Illinois, with setting down markers of what we know about apprenticeships, internships, and, to some degree, work-based learning. The research team has also been equally excited about the potential for this work to serve as a foundation on which ongoing and continuous data collection and analysis can continue moving forward in order to identify strengths, successful programs and communities that can serve as benchmarks, gaps in access, and areas in which specific resources are needed for intentional and high-quality workforce development to be integrated into schools, postsecondary institutions, community organizations, businesses, local governments, and standalone programs.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act

In Illinois, the current context for work-based learning of all types, ranging from initial career exploration activities to intensive experiences like internships and apprenticeships, received a significant boost with the passage of the Illinois Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act (also known as the PWR Act), which was approved with a bipartisan and unanimous vote in the General Assembly and was originally signed into law by Governor Bruce Rauner in 2016. Since that time, the PWR Act has been amended, most recently in 2022.

The PWR Act includes four primary policy initiatives that are all intended to work together to improve postsecondary and career readiness outcomes. These are:

- Postsecondary and Career Expectations (PaCE) Framework – The PaCE Framework requires[1] all school districts to have a framework outlining key components for career readiness and postsecondary preparation for students in grades 6 through 12. The state has developed statewide PaCE Frameworks that districts can choose to adopt for grades 6-8 and grades 9-12. The state's implementation of the PaCE Framework is led primarily by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) and also is done in partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE).
- College and Career Pathway Endorsements – The College and Career Pathway Endorsements provide an ISBE-approved credential in the Career Pathways[2] to students who complete a mix of academic coursework, including earning at least six hours of postsecondary credit while in high school related to the career, as well as a series of work-based learning experiences in the career pathway, including an internship of at least 60 hours. In addition to completing all the requirements laid out, students must demonstrate proficiency in all the technical competencies[3] for their career pathway as well as demonstrate proficiency with the Cross-Sector Essential Employability Competencies, which are also known as the Essential Skills.
- Transitional Instruction – Transitional Mathematics and Transitional English Language Arts are specific courses designed and implemented for high school seniors (12th grade students) that are intended to fortify the skills necessary for postsecondary success in these students. Students who successfully complete these courses are placed directly into credit-bearing courses at the community college level, thereby avoiding remedial/developmental coursework that increases time-to-graduation and diverts limited financial aid resources into courses that do not move students forward to degree completion. The development and implementation of transitional instruction has been led by ICCB with involvement from ISBE and IBHE.
- Competency-Based Education – At the time of the writing of this report, Competency-Based Education remains the least developed of the four areas of the PWR Act. A pilot was launched during the 2016-2017 school year, immediately following the passage of the PWR Act, and over its first two years, dozens of school districts were accepted into the pilot program and received waivers from ISBE in areas ranging from required seat time for students to the state's daily physical education requirement. School districts have implemented components of competency-based education to varying degrees.[4]

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[1] The PaCE Framework became a requirement, as opposed to a recommendation, for all school districts with the passage and signing of the 2022 PWR Act amendment. With this amendment, the PACE Framework was expanded from being focused on grades 8-12 to being focused on grades 6-12. Additionally, with this amendment, all school districts are required to have a career and postsecondary readiness framework posted on their websites by July 1, 2025, and in place in their schools with the 2025-2026 school year. (Under this law, Chicago Public Schools was required to have their framework posted by July 1, 2024, and in place for the 2024-2025 school year.) More information about the Illinois PaCE Framework is available at: https://www.isac.org/pace/

[2] The seven Illinois Career Pathways are: Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources; Arts and Communications; Finance and Business Services; Health Sciences and Technology; Human and Public Services; Information Technology; and, Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades. More information about the College and Career Pathway Endorsements is available at: https://www.isbe.net/pathwayendorsements

[3] The technical competencies for each Career Pathway as well as the Cross-Sector Essential Employability Competencies (Essential Skills) can all be found under the Competencies header/pull-down on the ISBE College and Career Pathway Endorsements website: https://www.isbe.net/pathwayendorsements

[4] In 2022, ISBE completed a report on the implementation of the Competency-Based Education pilot program. This memo and summary to the ISBE Board from September 2022 provides an overview: https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Comp-Based-Ed-Pilot-Prog-Rec-2022.pdf The full report is available at: https://edsystemsniu.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2022/08/Competency-Based-Pilot-Evaluation-For-the-Illinois-State-Board-of-Education-February-28_2022-v2.pdf

It is notable that responsibility for the implementation of the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act takes place across multiple state agencies. This aligns closely with the intentions of the legislation to create a more unified system that young people move through on their journey from secondary education into careers and that includes postsecondary education as a part of that journey.

It is also critical to note that, while ISBE has centered its leadership for components of the PWR Act with its Career and Technical Education (CTE) team, ISBE has also publicly maintained that the PWR Act is not confined to CTE. Rather, the PWR Act has been viewed as a broad curriculum and instruction policy initiative. Additionally, with the passage of Public Act 102-0917 when signed into law by Governor JB Pritzker in May 2022, Illinois school districts were now required to engage in career readiness work and postsecondary planning with students at a heretofore unseen level. Over the past two-and-a-half school years, school districts across the state have moved forward with significant increases in their implementations of the PaCE Framework and the College and Career Pathway Endorsements, in particular. One way in which the evidence of this work can be seen is in the number of high school students in Illinois who have earned their College and Career Pathway Endorsements. During the 2023-2024 school year, 2,422 students from 94 different school districts earned Endorsements. This was more than double the 1,072 students from 39 different school districts that had earned Endorsements during the previous 2022-2023 school year. For context, the first year that Endorsements were issued was during the 2019-2020 school year, when 5 students in 1 school district were issued with Endorsements. When one considers that thousands of students across so many school districts across Illinois are now participating in meaningful work-based learning experiences, it becomes clear that the connections between school districts, business and community partners, and the creation of work-based learning opportunities to serve all learners are of great, and growing, importance throughout Illinois—and, critically, in the compulsory portion of our educational system.

Perkins V and Illinois Perkins V Plan

In July 2018, the Perkins V Act was signed into law. The Perkins Act is the federal legislation that provides for Career and Technical Education (CTE) nationally as well as providing funding to support the states in their implementation of CTE. The Perkins Act focuses on supporting CTE at both the school district and postsecondary levels.

In order to receive CTE funding through the Perkins Act, each state must have its Perkins Plan approved by the United States Department of Education. In Illinois, responsibility for the development and implementation of the Illinois Perkins Plan[5] is the joint responsibility of ISBE and ICCB, and funding is shared between both agencies and between school districts and community colleges.

When Illinois originally developed its Perkins Plan in 2018 and 2019, ISBE and ICCB did so in a manner that aligned the Perkins Plan with the recently enacted Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act. Ensuring the alignment between the Perkins Plan and the PWR Act meant that Perkins funds would necessarily be spent by school districts, area career centers, and community colleges on the implementation of components of the PWR Act. Additionally, one massive benefit of this alignment is that educators, both organizational leaders and teachers, instructors, and faculty would be able to focus their efforts in a single forward direction rather than having initiatives designed to satisfy the federal government while other initiatives, possibly unrelated or only loosely related, would take time and energy to meet state requirements.

[5] The current Illinois Perkins Plan is available here: https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Perkins-Plan-FY2025-2028.pdf

Work-Based Learning Manual and the Work-Based Learning Continuum

As part of the statewide efforts to implement the PWR Act and Perkins V, Illinois has developed a number of critical statewide resources that serve as the backbone on which educators can build their knowledge and skills and that also provide support for local implementation efforts in a consistent manner statewide. As it relates to this research study, foremost among those resources is the ISBE Work-Based Learning Manual[6], which centers on the Work-Based Learning Continuum pictured below.

For more than five years, the Work-Based Learning Continuum has been in widespread use across multiple state agencies, including those focused on workforce development outside of the traditional P-20[7] educational structure. The Work-Based Learning Continuum has been the basis for professional development of educators, and the Work-Based Learning Manual is the reference for the required training for teachers of record for high school students in Work-Based Learning courses. In short, the Work-Based Learning Continuum is the conceptual framework for the ideal set of experiences that all adolescents in Illinois will now benefit from as part of their schooling experiences, and the Work-Based Learning Manual is literally and figuratively the textbook that provides guidance to educators with regards to how they implement these experiences for students ranging from meaningful career exploration to in-depth internships and/or apprenticeships.

As simple as the Work-Based Learning Continuum may seem to experienced workforce development professionals and CTE educators, the importance of its widespread use in professional development with educators across Illinois as a broad-based curricular initiative cannot be understated. The evidence of its implementation can be seen in the continued and dramatic expansion of awarded ISBE College and Career Pathway Endorsements, which requires that each student earning an Endorsement has experiences across most of the Work-Based Learning Continuum in order to earn that Endorsement.

Work-Based Learning Continuum

WIOA and Registered Youth Apprenticeships

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is a key piece of U.S. federal legislation enacted in 2014 to enhance the nation's workforce development system. It replaced the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, introducing modernized strategies to help job seekers acquire the skills needed for employment while ensuring businesses have access to a skilled workforce. WIOA aims to create a more integrated and efficient approach to workforce development by bringing together multiple programs and aligning them with current labor market demands.

One of WIOA's primary goals is to streamline workforce services, making them more accessible to individuals and employers. It emphasizes the need for collaboration across various programs, including adult, dislocated worker, and youth services, as well as vocational rehabilitation and employment services. This comprehensive approach helps create a system that supports people at all stages of their career journey.

[6] The ISBE Work-Based Learning Manual can be found at: https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Work-Based-Learning-Manual.pdf
[7] P-20 is a term built upon the notion of K-12 (Kindergarten through 12th grade) and is intended to span from Pre-Kindergarten, represented by the P, to an imaginary 20th grade, which is intended to represent everything from traditional postsecondary education including graduate school and professional school (medical school, law school) to the concept of ongoing adult education including both workforce professional development and ongoing adult education.

WIOA also prioritizes in-demand industries and sectors, encouraging workforce boards to focus their resources on areas with strong growth potential. By fostering partnerships among employers, educational institutions, and community organizations, WIOA promotes the development of sector strategies and career pathways, ensuring that workforce programs align with the needs of local economies. Additionally, it establishes performance accountability measures to ensure workforce programs deliver tangible results for both job seekers and businesses.

WIOA funds are distributed by the federal government, through the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and U.S. Department of Education, which allocates funds to states based on formulas. These formulas consider factors such as unemployment rates, poverty levels, and labor force size. Funds are divided into several key programs:

- Adult program: Provides career services, training, and support for adults aged 18 and older, with a focus on individuals facing barriers to employment.
- Dislocated Worker program: Assists workers who have been laid off or displaced, offering services like retraining and job placement.
- Youth program: Targets individuals aged 14-24, emphasizing support for out-of-school youth (in Illinois, 76% of funds are allocated to out-of-school) and preparing young people for successful careers through education, training, and employment.
- Employment Services (Wagner-Peyser Act): Offers job matching and placement services to connect job seekers and employers.
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): Provides support for individuals with disabilities to enter or re-enter the workforce.

The term "youth apprenticeship" may seem simple, yet, depending on the person, organization, or state, it can be interpreted differently. "Youth Apprenticeship" can refer to a range of programs, including Registered Apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, or high school-focused, non-registered apprenticeships. In the U.S., there is no standardized federal definition for "youth apprenticeship," much less a definition for Registered Youth Apprenticeship. Although the USDOL sometimes delineates Registered Apprenticeship programs within the Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Database System (RAPIDS) as Registered Youth Apprenticeship (RYA), regulations outlined within Title 29 CFR Part 30 do not differentiate between youth and adults. All USDOL registered apprenticeships, whether for youth or adults, must meet the same criteria. A recently released report by New America, "What Does 'Youth Apprenticeship' Mean? The Answer, According to Each State[8]", emphasizes how the lack of a nationally accepted definition can create confusion among workforce partners and employers alike.

Illinois Workforce Innovation Board and Work-Based Learning & Apprenticeship (WBLA) Committee

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) serves as the state's primary workforce development board, providing strategic leadership, oversight, and guidance to ensure alignment between state-level workforce priorities and local workforce innovation efforts. Illinois' 22 Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs) operate as the local arms of this system, implementing workforce initiatives and delivering services tailored to their specific regions. Together, the IWIB and the LWIAs collaborate to create a cohesive and responsive workforce development system, with the IWIB setting statewide policies and priorities, while the LWIAs execute these strategies through employer engagement, job seeker support, and regional partnerships. This coordinated approach ensures that workforce programs across Illinois are effective, accessible, and aligned with both local economic needs and statewide goals.

[8] What Does "Youth Apprenticeship" Mean? The Answer, According to Each State

The IWIB is comprised of the "core WIOA partners" and other members appointed by the Governor, including business, education, labor, and community organizations. The IWIB oversees the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in Illinois, which is divided into four key titles and administered by the core WIOA partners:

- Title I: Workforce programs serving adults, youth, and dislocated workers, administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity)
- Title II: Adult education programs, administered by the Illinois Community College Board (Illinois Community College Board)
- Title III: Wagner-Peyser employment services, administered by the Illinois Department of Employment Security (Illinois Department of Employment Security)
- Title IV: Vocational rehabilitation services, administered by the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services (Illinois Department of Human Services – Division of Rehabilitation Services)

As required by the USDOL, once an apprenticeship program is registered with the USDOL, that program is immediately qualified to be placed on the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), which allows WIOA funds to be used towards apprenticeships for both youth and adults. These funds are administered through Illinois' 22 Local Workforce Innovation Areas[9] (LWIAs).

The IWIB is responsible for developing the Illinois WIOA State Plan[10], collaborating with the Governor's Office and team on streamlining workforce programs into a cohesive system, guiding continuous improvements across the workforce system, and managing responsibilities outlined under WIOA. In the IWIB Winter 2024 Quarterly meeting, the Board voted unanimously to pass the new Final Draft IWIB Strategic Plan, which will be implemented starting January 2025. The new strategic plan outlines the IWIB's vision, mission, position, values, and priorities. The new strategic plan also defines the restructured committees, which embeds equity across all. The restructured committees, who will support the implementation of the new strategic plan, are as follows:

- Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Committee
- Continuous Improvement and Accountability Committee
- Executive Committee
- Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Committee

The Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship (WBLA) Committee, formerly known as the Apprenticeship Illinois Committee, will continue its work to support and expand work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities across the state and support initiatives that increase the availability of high-quality, paid work-based learning opportunities.

Many states have their own State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA). However, Illinois does not and, therefore, is considered an "OA state." This means the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship oversees the registration and administration of registered apprenticeships in Illinois. Although there is no SAA within Illinois, the IWIB's WBLA Committee serves as the advisory body to the State, providing intentional support and guidance in driving innovation and expanding the adoption of the apprenticeship model as a workforce development tool.

Since its inception, the IWIB's apprenticeship committee recognized the significance of the work-based learning continuum to provide skill development for individuals and build the workforce for businesses. The committee believes that as organizations and individuals embrace the apprenticeship model, its impact can be transformative. For employers, apprenticeships provide a practical way to build a skilled and dedicated workforce, which helps reduce turnover and boosts productivity. For apprentices, these programs are an opportunity to have meaningful careers by combining paid, on-the-job training with classroom learning.

[9] Regional and LWIA Information Local Workforce Innovation Area Matrix
[10] IllinoisWIOAStatePlanPY2024-2027.pdf

Since apprentices are paid from the beginning, apprenticeship programs foster economic mobility and financial stability while offering the prospect of long-term career growth. Both employers and apprentices gain from a mutually beneficial approach that develops skill gaps, promotes equity, and strengthens the workforce as a whole.

The growth of apprenticeship opportunities is dependent on employers utilizing the apprenticeship model as a workforce and talent development solution. Since more Illinoisians are seeking apprenticeship opportunities than there are programs available, the Committee has encouraged the State to invest in Apprenticeship Specialist[11] (aka navigators) and Apprenticeship Intermediaries to mitigate risks and ease the burdens on employers to create and utilize more apprenticeship programs as a workforce solution. The Committee has prioritized supporting Apprenticeship Specialists and Apprenticeship Intermediaries as a strategic approach to strengthen the foundation for expanding apprenticeships in Illinois. These roles are pivotal to the statewide apprenticeship system:

Regional Apprenticeship Specialists focus on engaging businesses to create apprenticeship opportunities, representing the demand side, while Apprenticeship Intermediaries work on the supply side by managing and implementing programs, recruiting participants, and preparing them for apprenticeships.

Additionally, the Committee has made it a priority to strengthen connections and foster collaboration within the statewide apprenticeship ecosystem. Recognizing the need for accessible, centralized resources, the Committee launched www.ApprenticeshipIllinois.com as a comprehensive hub to support individuals and organizations engaged in apprenticeships.

This platform offers a wide array of tools and information, including professional development opportunities, case studies that showcase successful programs, and instructional and promotional videos. Additionally, the website provides access to "office hours," where individuals can receive personalized, one-on-one assistance. For those seeking direct engagement, the site also features contact details for Apprenticeship Specialists who are available to provide expert guidance. By bringing these resources together in one place, the Committee aims to empower stakeholders, streamline access to critical information, and drive the continued growth of apprenticeships across Illinois.

[11] https://www.illinoisworknet.com/ApprenticeshipIL/Pages/Employers.aspx

Purpose of the study and research questions

This study was commissioned by SkillsUSA Illinois, which is the state-level organization of the international SkillsUSA. SkillsUSA[12] is a national nonprofit that has existed for decades, that was rebranded as SkillsUSA in 2004. Both before and since that time, SkillsUSA has developed instructional materials for students and teachers across a variety of career fields, and since the late 1960s, SkillsUSA has developed and promoted local, regional, and national student competitions. In addition to the national organization, SkillsUSA has state-level chapters in each of the fifty states. SkillsUSA Illinois[13] is the state chapter in Illinois.

SkillsUSA Illinois not only supports its member schools throughout Illinois, but the organization is also an active member of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) community in Illinois alongside other professional organizations and the state agencies. In addition to providing opportunities directly to students, SkillsUSA Illinois also supports educators with professional development and is actively engaged in policymaking and implementation.

Believing in the importance of apprenticeships and work-based learning, SkillsUSA Illinois commissioned this study to provide a comprehensive landscape analysis of the state of apprenticeships across industries and communities throughout Illinois. SkillsUSA Illinois engaged in a contract agreement with the Northern Illinois University P-20 Research and Data Collaborative[14] with a research team comprised of the Illinois P-20 Network[15] and the Workforce Policy Lab from the NIU Center for Governmental Studies[16]. Each of these organizations has extensive experience in workforce development and CTE across Illinois and in working with both state agencies as well as local organizations. Additionally, each of these organizations has expertise with regards to both research methodology and conducting statewide research and evaluation studies as well as on-the-ground work with partners in communities across Illinois on practice and implementation in each of these areas.

While the research team provided regular updates to the SkillsUSA Illinois leadership team on the implementation of the research process, the data collection, including the development of the surveys, has been independently completed by the NIU P-20 Research and Data Collaborative team. Additionally, this report has been independently produced by the NIU P-20 Research and Data Collaborative team based on the findings in the data as well as its expertise with research and in practice with CTE, work-based learning, apprenticeships, and workforce development.

The research questions that were identified at the outset of this project as a result of conversations with the SkillsUSA Illinois team included the following:

- What is the definition (or the range of definitions) of an apprenticeship across industries in Illinois?
- What governmental data is available regarding apprenticeships currently in place across the State of Illinois? Based on this governmental data, how many apprenticeships are there? In what career fields/occupations? In what geographic locations? How long are the apprenticeships? Are they paid and to what degree? Who is currently filling these apprenticeships (gender, race/ethnicity, education-level, age, etc.)?
- What non-governmental data is available regarding apprenticeships currently in place across the State of Illinois? What are the sources of this data? What are the differences between this data and the governmental data? Based on the non-governmental data, how many apprenticeships are there? In what career fields/occupations? In what geographic locations? How long are the apprenticeships? Are they paid and to what degree? Who is currently filling these apprenticeships (gender, race/ethnicity, education-level, age, etc.)?
- What other apprenticeships might exist that are currently not captured by existing governmental and non-governmental data? How many additional, uncaptured apprenticeships are there? In what career fields/occupations? In what geographic locations? How long are the apprenticeships? Are they paid and to what degree? Who is currently filling these apprenticeships (gender, race/ethnicity, education-level, age, etc.)? Do these apprenticeships meet the quality standards of the United States Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeships?

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[12] SkillsUSA – More information about SkillsUSA can be found on their website at: https://www.skillsusa.org/
[13] SkillsUSA Illinois – More information about SkillsUSA Illinois can be found on their website at: https://www.skillsusaillinois.org/
[14] Northern Illinois University (NIU) Research and Data Collaborative – More information about the NIU Research and Data Collaborative can be found at: https://www.niu.edu/p20-research-data-collaborative/index.shtml
[15] Illinois P-20 Network – The Illinois P-20 Network is part of the Northern Illinois University Center for P-20 Engagement, which is housed in NIU's Division of Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development (OERD). More information can be found about the Illinois P-20 Network at: https://p20network.niu.edu
[16] NIU Center for Governmental Studies – More information can be found about the NIU Center for Governmental Studies at: https://www.cgs.niu.edu/

- What other work-based learning programs exist that could be entry points into apprenticeships, where either government or non-government sources can provide the data?
- Overall, across Illinois and across industries…
  - How many apprenticeships are there?
  - In what career fields/occupations? In what geographic locations?
  - How long are the apprenticeships?
  - Are they paid and to what degree?
  - Who is currently filling these apprenticeships (gender, race/ethnicity, education-level, age, etc.)?
- What policies and/or practices are promising to increase and/or strengthen apprenticeships (and/or access to apprenticeships) across Illinois?
- What additional questions exist for future research regarding apprenticeships in Illinois?

In addition to these research questions, based on this research team's expertise and work in the field with organizations of all sizes across Career Pathways and in regions across Illinois, the researchers understand that there is a notable and well-reported degree of lack of knowledge and/or confusion about apprenticeships in the field. As Alfred, et al. pointed out, "…we would not have known the difference between internships, co-ops and apprenticeships based on interviews and observations."[17] The authors of this report go on to correctly point that, "…apprenticeship has the most formal definition and clearest set of guidelines, established by the U.S. Department of Labor." At the same time, while we find that the definition for actual apprenticeships is clear, there are also educators, business owners, and other community members who interchangeably refer to internships and apprenticeships or who have created their own personal definitions that are in use in their wording; for example, that internships are unpaid and apprenticeships are paid and they are otherwise the same.

Given the context of potentially confusing and interchangeable definitions that are in use among those in the field and given the expansion of work-based learning across Illinois, particularly as a result of the PWR Act, the research team also identified that a complete landscape analysis of the potential for growth in apprenticeships, sitting at the most in-depth and complex end of the Work-Based Learning Continuum could not be developed without also examining what is taking place across Illinois with internships and work-based learning generally.

Finally, on this last point of extending this research to cover a broader swath of work-based learning, primarily focusing on internships, it is also important to consider that the changes currently taking place in secondary schools across Illinois with regards to work-based learning may have an outsized impact on what could still develop in the coming years with potential changes, and possible expansion, of apprenticeships. Given that high schools are the last layer of compulsory education that takes place, there can often have an impact on a far greater percentage of the population in comparison to policy changes that seek to impact people following high school. Given the rapid increase in implementation of work-based learning in Illinois high schools, as evidenced by the continued and dramatic increase in College and Career Pathway Endorsements (and the requirement that all of those students have completed an internship of at least 60 hours), this work taking place in school districts and with their business and community partners sets the stage for apprenticeship-related policies that may be considered. As a result, the research team has sought to include what is taking place with internships, in addition to apprenticeships, from the perspectives of school districts, area career centers, and postsecondary institutions.

[17] From *Work-Based Learning Opportunities for High School Students* (2013) - Alfeld, C., Charner, I., Johnson, L., & Watts, E. (2013). Work-Based Learning Opportunities for High School Students. *National Research Center for Career and Technical Education.*

Given the nature of this as a landscape analysis, data was collected from a wide range of sources for this report.

Governmental data sources included:

- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity/United States Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship data
- Illinois State Board of Education Work-Based Learning course enrollment data

Non-governmental data sources included:

- SkillsUSA Illinois Apprenticeship Landscape Analysis Survey – Educational Organizations
- SkillsUSA Illinois Apprenticeship Landscape Analysis Survey – Business and Community Partners

In the case of each survey, these surveys were developed specifically for this study and the context of Illinois. These surveys were developed with the goal of being well-structured to allow for ease of participation by respondents and thoughtful comparative analysis by the research team while also being open-ended in a way that allowed for respondents to provide whatever data they saw fit. Given the nature of this work as a landscape analysis, it was important to the research team to be able to collect whatever information was offered by respondents initially.

Since the surveys were a particularly important component of this study, great effort was made to ensure that the surveys were sent, in as many ways and on as many occasions as possible, to the potential respondents. Throughout September and October 2024, the NIU research team actively reached out to potential partners for survey distribution for each of the surveys respectively. To enhance the visibility of the project, a specific website was launched in August 2024 on the Illinois P-20 Network website[18] for communication about the project to stakeholders and others who may be interested. This website also served as the home of links to both surveys while those were available throughout October 2024 and into early November 2024. Each survey was linked with a clearly labeled button near the top of the page with the buttons being positioned side-by-side but also with plenty of white, neutral space around each to ensure that both buttons were highly visible on the page.

Additionally, care was taken by the research team to ensure that both the website and the surveys met accessibility standards to ensure that those accessing the surveys would be successfully able to complete them. It should be noted that the surveys were published only in English as this seemed appropriate for the audience of potential respondents of each survey.

The NIU research team directly shared both surveys through three Illinois P-20 Network Newsletters, which has a wide audience of school district and postsecondary practitioners across Illinois who are deeply involved in career readiness and work-based learning implementation.

Each survey was distributed to a variety of partners electronically for distribution through their distribution lists. Of course, SkillsUSA Illinois received both surveys as did all of the education-related partners. In their cases, the text of the survey distribution request encouraged educational organizations to complete the education survey and to share the business and community partner survey with their work-based learning partners, including partners engaged in internships and apprenticeships. These educational organizations that were asked to assist with survey distribution through their normal channels included:

- ISBE CTE Team
- ICCB CTE Team
- ISBE Career Pathways User Group
- Education for Employment System Directors across Illinois
- Area Career Center Directors across Illinois
- Community College CTE Deans Commission

[18] Illinois P-20 Network SkillsUSA Illinois Apprenticeship Landscape Analysis website is available online at: https://p20network.niu.edu/skillsusa-illinois-apprenticeship-landscape-analysis/

For distribution of just the survey for business and community partners, the NIU research team shared text providing context and the survey link to the following organizations:

- Apprenticeship Illinois
- GCAMP/VIA
- Illinois Association for Talent Development (Illinois ATD)
- Illinois Chamber of Commerce
- Illinois Manufacturing Association
- Illinois SHRM
- Illinois Workforce Partnership – WIOA LWIAs

In many cases, communications were sent multiple times through each of these organizations. Additionally, posts were shared regularly on LinkedIn through the Illinois P-20 Network LinkedIn page and through likes and sharing by others, those posts also contributed to awareness and survey completion.

Finally, when the surveys were closed in early November 2024, the research team began the process of data review and preparation. Again, the survey was designed intentionally to have both closed- and open-ended questions to balance clean, usable, comparable data with insuring that as much data could be collected as possible. For example, in cleaning the data, when responses were provided to open-ended questions that sought numerical responses, respondents also entered text, such as: *IDK, I don't know,* and/or *Unknown*. In this context, we typically replaced these text answers with 0 in the dataset given the pattern of responses overall, which showed that if there were interns or apprentices, respondents knew and knew about how many. For other types of questions, those types of answers were coded as missing data. Likewise, while most respondents entered specific numbers, a handful or respondents entered a range, such as *10-20*. In these cases, we used the mean, e.g., 15. The one exception was in the handful of instances where respondents entered *Less than 5*. In those cases, the research team entered 2 as the numerical value to error close to the mean but to also ensure that the actual number of interns or apprentices was not overstated.

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity/United States Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeships data results

Within Illinois, there are more than 21,400 apprentices in U.S. Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeships. About 75% of all apprentices are enrolled in construction apprenticeships. The only other occupation group with more than 1,000 apprentices is installation, maintenance, and repair, with about 12% of apprentices. These occupations are primarily in the manufacturing industry.

Table 1. Total Registered Apprentices as of December 31, 2024[19]

Occupation Group	Apprentices
Construction	15,882
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	2,614
Production	724
Transportation and Material Moving	271
Office and Administrative Support	188
Healthcare Support	226
Computer and Math	185
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	171
Food Preparation and Serving Related	163
Architecture and Engineering	180
Protective Service	160
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	87
Educational Instruction and Library	259
All Other Occupations	311
Total Active Apprentices	21,421

After declining significantly in the pandemic year of 2020, the number of new apprentices has been growing steadily. This growth has occurred across almost all occupation groups. Growth in 2024 has been especially significant in sectors that have not traditionally had high levels of apprenticeship including Healthcare, Education, Administrative Support, and Computer occupations.

The growth in these emerging sectors for apprenticeship has made the mix of occupations more diverse. The share of new apprentices in construction occupations fell from 74% in 2019 to 64% in 2024. Installation, maintenance, and repair also had a slightly smaller share over the same period. The share of other occupations grew from 15% in 2019 to 25% in 2024.

[19] Data source for Tables 1-4: U.S. Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Database System (RAPIDS).

Table 2. Registered Apprenticeship Program Entries by Year

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Construction	4,795	3,421	4,334	5,577	6,122	5,817
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	725	538	864	949	844	937
Production	249	181	198	360	343	362
Transportation and Material Moving	300	207	262	356	264	263
Healthcare Support	35	13	70	135	180	213
Educational Instruction and Library	0	11	2	13	52	226
Office and Administrative Support	55	33	64	57	69	185
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	25	28	20	59	71	159
Computer and Math	18	39	119	210	114	158
Protective Service	61	80	47	95	91	116
Architecture and Engineering	80	30	83	76	99	114
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	53	16	50	55	46	86
Food Preparation and Serving Related	19	2	39	86	140	72
All Other Occupations	60	87	149	202	158	333
Total New Apprentices	**6,475**	**4,686**	**6,301**	**8,230**	**8,593**	**9,041**

Registered apprenticeships became more demographically diverse in recent years as well. The share of non-white new apprentices grew from 26% in 2019 to 46% in 2024. The overall Illinois workforce is about 38% non-white.

Female participation in apprenticeship significantly lags the overall workforce, where about 50% of workers are women. Only about 14% of new apprentices were female in 2024. Females have the lowest rates of participation in the two largest occupation groups, where they only represent 6% of new apprentices.

Female and non-white participants tend to have a greater presence in lower paying occupations. Healthcare support entrants in 2024 were 80% non-white and 88% female, while better paying healthcare practitioner entrants were 61% non-white and 66% female. Non-white participants are also over-represented in transportation, administrative support, computer, and food preparation occupations.

Table 3. Demographics of Registered Apprenticeship Program Entries, 2019 vs. 2024

	2019		2024	
Occupation Group	**Nonwhite**	**Female**	**Nonwhite**	**Female**
Construction	31%	4%	40%	6%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	45%	5%	45%	6%
Production	38%	10%	38%	10%
Transportation and Material Moving	72%	15%	70%	17%
Office and Administrative Support	62%	40%	88%	15%
Healthcare Support	77%	97%	80%	88%
Computer and Math	83%	44%	74%	41%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	48%	92%	61%	66%
Food Preparation and Serving Related	42%	32%	91%	57%
Architecture and Engineering	59%	11%	63%	8%
Protective Service	15%	34%	33%	24%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	28%	36%	32%	53%
Educational Instruction and Library	-	-	56%	78%
All Other Occupations	69%	63%	57%	38%
Total Active Apprentices	**36%**	**7%**	**46%**	**14%**

While apprentices are classified by the occupation that they are training for, Registered Apprenticeship programs are classified by the industry in which they operate. Not surprisingly, apprenticeship programs are predominately in the construction industry.

Apprenticeship programs in public administration and education have been growing. Public administration covers prisons, police and fire departments, and local governments. Community colleges and universities also fall in this sector, although they frequently run programs for a variety of public sector companies.

Table 4. Industry Sectors of Registered Apprenticeship Programs, December 2024

NAICS	Industry	Apprenticeship Programs	Active Apprentices	
23	Construction	180	17,711	86%
31-33	Manufacturing	94	1,194	6%
92	Public Administration	39	442	2%
61	Educational Services	39	391	2%
22	Utilities	11	167	1%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	13	161	1%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	14	148	1%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	5	141	1%
56	Admin, Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services	7	120	1%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	6	118	1%
42	Wholesale Trade	8	47	0%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	10	33	0%
	All other industries	11	40	0%
	Totals	**437**	**20,713**	

Illinois State Board of Education Work-Based Learning school-level course enrollment data results

The research team has worked closely with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) data team in order to produce a data file that can be analyzed for this study, that meets ISBE's data privacy and protection requirements, and that focuses on all of the newer Work-Based Learning course codes that have been implemented in recent years to replace the previous model of Co-op courses. It should be noted that one parameter of the data requests of ISBE is that ISBE cannot provide enrollment numbers when the group/cohort size in a particular category is less than 10 students (9 or fewer students in the particular category). This is generally true of all ISBE reporting, including what is published on the Illinois Report Card[20] website.

As mentioned in other places in this report, the importance of closely examining the data from the work-based learning courses is that such data represents the most thorough and consistent data reporting mechanism available related to work-based learning in secondary schools across Illinois. All school districts in Illinois upload student enrollments in all courses in which students are enrolled, range from courses like math and science courses to elective and special area courses. These work-based learning courses are specifically designed to align to federal Perkins V requirements, and the work-based learning designation has replaced the previous designation that was termed, in short, *co-op*, previous to Perkins V. With high schools being the last place in the educational, career readiness, and workforce development pipeline that students attend in common, it is especially important to track the activities that they are receiving in this environment.

[20] The ISBE Illinois Report Card website is the official site for school district data in Illinois. This site is designed to meet all of ISBE's state and federal reporting transparency requirement needs and to serve parents, community members, and educators in developing a full understanding of school performance. The Illinois Report Card can be viewed at: https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/

ISBE provided a dataset to the research team that included 1,912 records of courses and schools. In total, there were 76 work-based learning courses in which students were enrolled across 466 schools throughout Illinois. The number of schools in which each course was offered and had students enrolled during the 2023-2024 school year varied widely from as few as 1 school in which a course was offered to the one course, Nursing Assistant I, that was offered in 342 of the 466 schools. Table 5 below shows each course as well as the number of schools in which it was offered that had students enrolled.

Table 5. ISBE Work-Based Learning Courses with Students Enrolled in 2023-2024 and the Number of Schools in which Each Course was Offered

ISBE Work-Based Learning Course	Number of Schools Offering with 2023-2024 Enrollments
Accounting Workplace Experience	9
Administrative Assistant Workplace Experience	2
Agribusiness Workplace Experience	16
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources Workplace Experience	48
Animal Systems Workplace Experience	15
Apparel and Textiles Workplace Experience	5
Architecture & Construction Workplace Experience	29
Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications Workplace Experience	18
Athletic Training Workplace Experience	7
Auto-body Technician Workplace Experience	12
Automotive Technician Workplace Experience	53
Barbering I	21
Barbering II	16
Barbering Workplace Experience	9
Broadcast Technology Workplace Experience	2
Building Maintenance Workplace Experience	2
Business Management Workplace Experience	30
Business, Management & Administration Workplace Experience	90
Child Care Workplace Experience	20
Computer Installation and Repair Workplace Experience	4
Computer Programming Workplace Experience	2
Computer Science Workplace Experience	7
Cosmetology I	185
Cosmetology II	130
Cosmetology Workplace Experience	35
Drafting Workplace Experience	2
Early Childhood Education Workplace Experience	33
Education & Training Workplace Experience	44
Elder Care Workplace Experience	1
Electricity/Electronics Workplace Experience	1
Emergency Medical Technician	114
EMT Workplace Experience	23
Engineering Workplace Experience	11
Entrepreneurial Workplace Experience	21

ISBE Work-Based Learning Course	Number of Schools Offering with 2023-2024 Enrollments
Environmental Services Systems Workplace Experience	1
Finance Cluster Workplace Experience	5
Finance Workplace Experience	4
Fire Management Workplace Experience	13
Food Products and Processing Systems Workplace Experience	2
General Construction Workplace Experience	35
General Education Workplace Experience	30
Government & Public Administration Workplace Experience	1
Graphic Communications Workplace Experience	19
Health Science Workplace Experience	31
Hospitality & Tourism Workplace Experience	41
Human Services Workplace Experience	44
HVAC Workplace Experience	1
Industrial Electronics Workplace Experience	1
Information Technology Workplace Experience	29
Interior Design Workplace Experience	1
Law Enforcement Workplace Experience	2
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security Workplace Experience	9
Legal Assistant/Paralegal Workplace Experience	3
Machine Tool Technology Workplace Experience	2
Manufacturing Workplace Experience	32
Marketing Cluster Workplace Experience	6
Marketing Workplace Experience	16
Medical/Clinical Assistant Workplace Experience	17
Nail Technology I	10
Nail Technology II	6
Natural Resources Systems Workplace Experience	1
Naval Workplace Experience	1
Networking Systems Workplace Experience	2
Nursing Assistant I	342
Nursing Assistant Workplace Experience	67
Nutrition and Wellness Workplace Experience	5
Pharmacy Technician	5
Pharmacy Technician Workplace Experience	1
Plant Systems Workplace Experience	1
Power, Structural and Technical Systems Workplace Experience	8
Restaurant, Food and Beverage Services Workplace Experience	50
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics Workplace Experience	4
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics Workplace Experience	13
Web Page and Media Design Workplace Experience	3
Welding Workplace Experience	22
Work and Family Studies Workplace Experience	9

In reviewing Table 5 above, it is clear that there is a wide range of the degree to which specific courses are offered in schools across Illinois. This range is also evident in the measures of central tendency. The mean number of schools in which a course was offered was 25.16, and the median number of schools in which a course was offered was 9.5. The dataset's mode was 1. In other words, this very wide distribution does skew toward many of these courses only being offered at a handful of schools while other courses are offered at dozens of schools.

When the above work-based learning courses are categorized by Career Pathway, the research team is able to then examine how work-based learning courses are offered across Career Pathways. Table 6 below shows the distribution of the 76 work-based learning courses by Career Pathway.

Table 6. Distribution of Work-Based Learning Courses by Career Pathway

Career Pathway	Number of Work-Based Learning Courses
Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources	6
Arts and Communications	4
Finance and Business Services	12
Health Sciences and Technology	10
Human and Public Services	21
Information Technology	5
Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades	18

It is just as important to consider the frequency which courses are offered across the state. Table 7 below displays all 1,912 course offerings across 466 schools distributed by Career Pathway.

Table 7. All Offered Work-Based Learning Courses Statewide in 2023-2024 Distributed by Career Pathway

Career Pathway	Number of Work-Based Learning Courses Offered in Schools (2023-2024)
Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources	83
Arts and Communications	42
Finance and Business Services	279
Health Sciences and Technology	612
Human and Public Services	622
Information Technology	44
Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades	230
Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades	230

In both Tables 6 and 7, the same consistent pattern emerges that appears throughout this report. Health Sciences and Technology and Human Public Services courses represent a large percentage of offerings with Finance and Business Services and Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades courses also representing a sizable number of the course offerings. As appears consistently, Arts and Communications and Information Technology trail in their adoption of course offerings.

In addition to understanding what courses are offered, this analysis also seeks to explore what schools are offering work-based learning courses and to what extent they are doing so. As previously noted in this section, 466 schools across Illinois have work-based learning course offerings in the ISBE dataset. For this section, the research team consistently calculated enrollments in grades 9 through 12, the traditional high school grade structure in Illinois, in order to make consistent comparisons across schools. The smallest of the 466 schools had 49 high school students, and the largest had 4,573 high school students. The mean was 961.79 students, and

the median was 525 students. The 466 schools included here represents approximately 61.7% of all of the public schools in Illinois with high school students[21]. Table 8 below shows how many schools offer how many courses. Nearly one-quarter of schools offer just one work-based learning course, and only 40 schools offer 10 or more work-based learning courses. Over one-half of schools (55.6%) offer 3 or fewer work-based learning courses.

Table 8. Number of Schools Offering Work-Based Learning Courses By Number of Courses Offered

Number of Courses Offered	Number of Schools	Percent (%) of All 466 Schools Offering WBL Courses
1	112	24.0
2	87	18.7
3	60	12.9
4	48	10.3
5	43	9.2
6	29	6.2
7	24	5.2
8	11	2.4
9	12	2.6
10	16	3.4
11	8	1.7
12	2	0.4
13	2	0.4
14	1	0.2
15	1	0.2
16	4	0.9
17	3	0.6
18	1	0.2
19	1	0.2
20	1	0.2

Unsurprisingly given the above information, the mean work-based learning courses offered within a school is 4.1, and the median is 3. Geographically, courses offering work-based learning are distributed widely across Illinois.

The research team continued by examining the degree to which school size and school funding, based on school districts' Evidence-Based Funding Formular Adequacy Level, as well as each school's NCES Locale[22], which describes the community type, impacted work-based learning course offerings. These indicators are again used later in this report as part of the analysis of the educational organization survey data.

The research team identified these characteristics, because each of these areas has the potential to significantly impact work-based learning. District size can impact the number of work-based learning opportunities as larger districts have the ability to provide more diverse course offerings to students in preparation for work-based learning experiences, to be more able to avoid scheduling and staffing conflicts that prevent work-based learning, and to be more likely, with more staff overall, to be able to have some staff that are expert with and/or focused on (or both) with regards to work-based learning. In 2017, Illinois instituted a new model for funding school districts, Evidence-Based Funding (EBF). As part of the Evidence-Based Funding

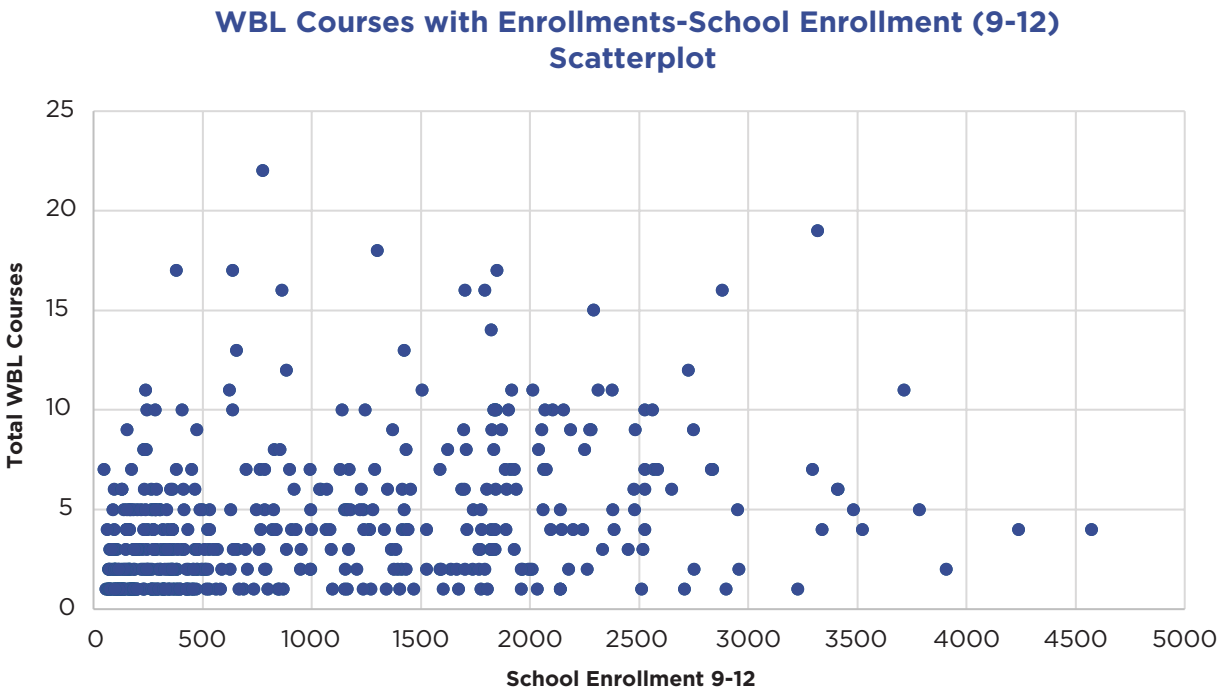
[21] Using ISBE's Directory of Educational Entities, which is updated nightly and publicly available on the ISBE website (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Data-Analysis-Directories.aspx), the research team identified 755 schools with students in grades 9 through 12.

[22] The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) classifies communities by Locale, ranging from city to suburban to town to rural. Within each of these four Locale categories, there are three sub-categories, resulting in a total of 12 different Locale categories. More information can be seen on the NCES website at: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/edge/Geographic/LocaleBoundaries

Formula, an adequacy level, the Adequacy Target, is calculated for each school district. This is the amount of money needed in that district specifically to adequately educate its students based on the needs of its students. Then, a second calculation is made for each district, its Adequacy Percentage, and this is how of that adequacy amount (100%) the district has available to spend. The goal of EBF is to continually increase the number of school districts that are funded at minimally 90% of their Adequacy Target. The state has made significant improvements in this area since 2017, though many districts remain underfunded while there are also many districts that have well-over 100% of their Adequacy Target. The research team recognizes that districts that are more adequately funded, and particularly those over 100% of their Adequacy Target, may be more likely to incur the additional expenses of work-based learning. Finally, the research team identified the NCES Locales as a good indicator of how likely a school district may be to be able to find business and community partners. The less dense a school district's community is, the fewer businesses and community partners that there are likely to be in which to provide work-based learning experiences. Additionally, our work in the field across Illinois has taught us that in more rural areas of Illinois, there are far more very small businesses in terms of the number of employees in those businesses. Business size seems to impact the ability of a business to engage in work-based learning, though further study of this in the context of the diverse communities across Illinois would be beneficial.

Figure 1 below provides an overview of the relationship between the number of work-based learning courses and the size of the school based on student enrollment. In this scatterplot, each dot represents one of the 466 schools that offered work-based learning courses during the 2023-2024 school year.

Figure 1. Scatterplot of Work-Based Learning Course Enrollments with School Enrollment, Grades 9-12, By School, 2023-2024



It is not surprising that smaller schools are typically going to have a lower number of work-based learning courses that they offer. Likewise, it is also not surprising that just because a school is much larger, they may also not offer significantly more work-based learning courses as there are a variety of factors that impact course offerings in a high school setting, including but not limited to school funding, educational priorities and alignment with course offerings, the school's history of course offerings, and the courses that current teachers are licensed to teach. What maybe surprising is the number of schools that do offer a surprisingly high number of work-based learning courses given the size of the school. For example, 4 of the 9 schools that offer 15 or more

work-based learning courses are comparatively smaller with student enrollments of well under 1,000 students. Specifically, they have 863, 776, 636, and 380 students respectively. The correlation of student enrollment in grades 9 through 12 is statistically significant though there is a relatively small correlation of .362. In real-world terms, larger schools do tend to be more likely to offer more work-based learning courses, but many large schools do not and many smaller schools do offer many work-based learning courses.

The research team also examined the degree to which funding impacted the number of work-based learning courses that were offered to students during the 2023-2024 school year. The correlation between a school district's adequacy percentage and the number of work-based learning courses offered at each school was not statistically significant. In real world terms, on the extremes, there were school districts with high levels of funding offering few work-based learning courses, and there were school districts with low levels of funding offering many work-based learning courses. To understand the reasons and causes behind this pattern will require additional research.

Using the NCES Locale Codes, the research team sought to determine if there were any patterns in the number of work-based learning courses offered based on the type of community – city, suburban, town, or rural. Based on the previously mentioned minimal impact of school size and the reality school funding appeared to be unrelated to the number of work-based learning courses that were offered during the 2023-2024 school year, the research team is confident that the Locales represent their own unique variable. While there are actually 12 distinct Locales, for this study, the 4 top-level categories were used: City, Suburban, Town, and Rural. Table 9 below outlines the data for each of the four groups, which ranged in size from 50 schools to 166 schools. These larger size groups, in terms of the number of schools included, allowed for a high level of confidence in the statistical analysis.

Table 9. Analysis of Work-Based Learning Courses in Schools Based on Locale, 2023-2024

Locale	*n*	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	Minimum	Maximum
City	50	4.30	3.598	.509	1	19
Suburban	153	5.70	3.694	.299	1	18
Town	97	3.44	3.585	.364	1	22
Rural	166	2.96	2.430	.189	1	17

Looking at the minimum and maximum values on the right-side of Table 9, it is noteworthy how similar these are across locale type, providing further evidence in line with the discussion about school size and work-based learning course offerings. Additionally, the standard deviations are relatively consistent in comparison to the mean for each group. The means are most noteworthy. The research team was able to determine that the Suburban mean of 5.70 was significantly greater than the Town (3.44) or Rural (2.96) means, though there was no statistically significant difference between either the Suburban and City means or between the City mean and the Town and Rural means. It should be noted that schools in the Suburban group are not just found in Chicagoland or the Metro East but throughout Illinois, including the Rockford region and in communities throughout Central Illinois.

Finally, the research team was extremely interested in developing a strong understanding of which students were and were not participating in work-based learning courses, considering demographic factors such as gender, race/ethnicity, and students' status as with regards to learning English and to whether or not they have an IEP or 504 Plan. Unfortunately, based on this dataset, there is very little meaningful analysis that can take place due to two factors: (a) the limitation of not reporting the number of participants in a group when the number is less than 10 students, and (b) the reality that, as the research team would expect, in many schools, even very large schools, these courses frequently have 9 or fewer students enrolled due to their highly specialized nature. While the data does demonstrate some particularly large groups of enrolled students, of the 1,912 courses identified, 1,463 have 9 or fewer students enrolled overall. Then, when we break this down further by other demographic factors, like gender or race/ethnicity, the percentages of groups for which a specific number of students is not provided climbs even higher.

Educational organizations survey data results

Initially, there were 266 total responses to the educational organization survey data. After conducting an initial analysis to ensure that the data was complete and clean, there were 100 responses that were left for analysis. This process included the removal of surveys that were started but for which there were no actual responses, and it included a process by which multiple surveys from the same identified organizations were merged (e.g., two different people from one school district each completed the survey were merged into one response). Prior to looking at the data, it is important to note that both surveys were designed as anonymous surveys to promote a high response rate, and each survey also voluntarily allowed respondents to identify their organization. As will be seen later in this analysis, when respondents did identify their organization, this allowed for more sophisticated data analysis to occur.

The responses by organization type as reported were:

- School districts – 51
- Community colleges – 7
- Area career centers – 7
- EFE Region – 1
- Unknown/Not self-identified – 34

While the research team had hoped for both a greater number of responses and an even greater percentage of respondents to self-identify their organizations as will be shown below, responses were diverse in terms of geography, organization size, and the communities that these organizations serve. This diversity in responding organizations allows the research team to take confidence, particularly in the data from school districts, as a useful sample snapshot of apprenticeships and work-based learning at this time in late 2024 and early 2025.

In examining the data from all 100 respondents, it is initially interesting to first examine the experiences of their students on the previously shown Work-Based Learning Continuum, moving from left, which includes lower intensity/less time activities, to right, which culminates with internships and then apprenticeships, the most intensive of the activities highlighted on the Work-Based Learning Continuum.

As seen in Figure 2 below, nearly 60% of survey respondents stated that all or nearly all of their students experience Career Awareness or Career Exploration activities. These activities might include everything from guest speakers in the classroom to on-site field trips and job shadowing, so there are a wide range of activities that are captured in this question. Additionally, the research team might assume that organizations that respond to this survey are more likely than other organizations to be engaged in Work-Based Learning or other aspects of Career and Technical Education. When combining the first two columns in the graph, over two-thirds of students in the respondents' organizations are experiencing Career Awareness or Career Exploration activities. Upon looking at this, the research team is very curious about what this data may have looked like prior to the PWR Act or during its early years before the COVID-19 pandemic. Having a statewide baseline from all school districts and community colleges and being able to track it annually would be very useful to understand the implications of the PWR Act as well as what experiences students are receiving.

Figure 2. Percentage of Students Engaged in Career Exploration Activities

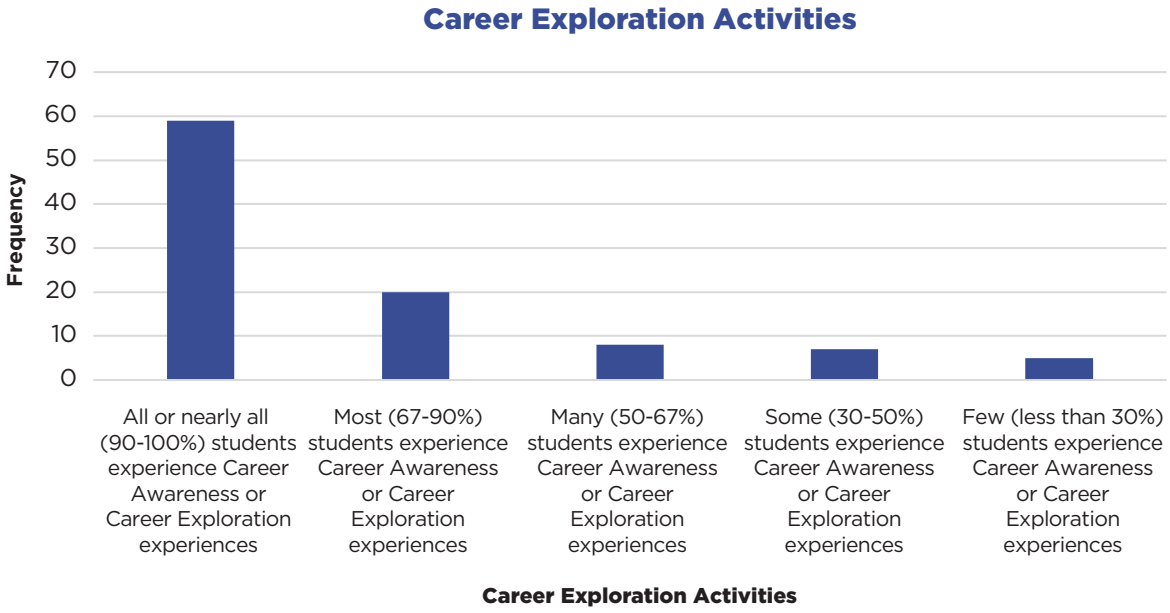
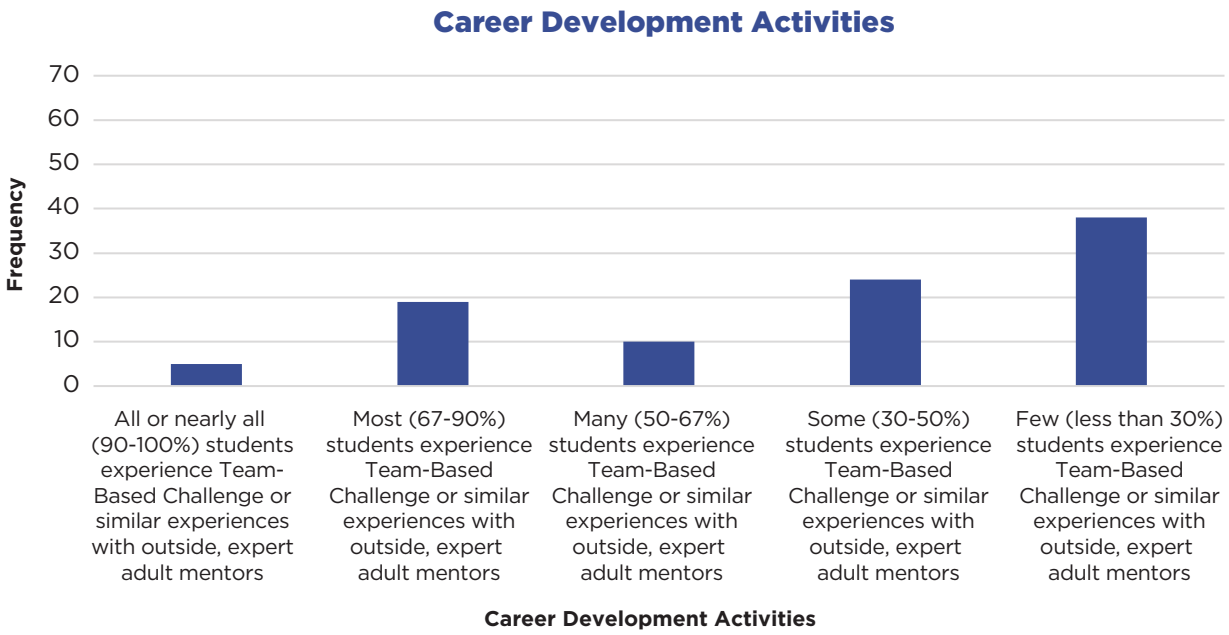


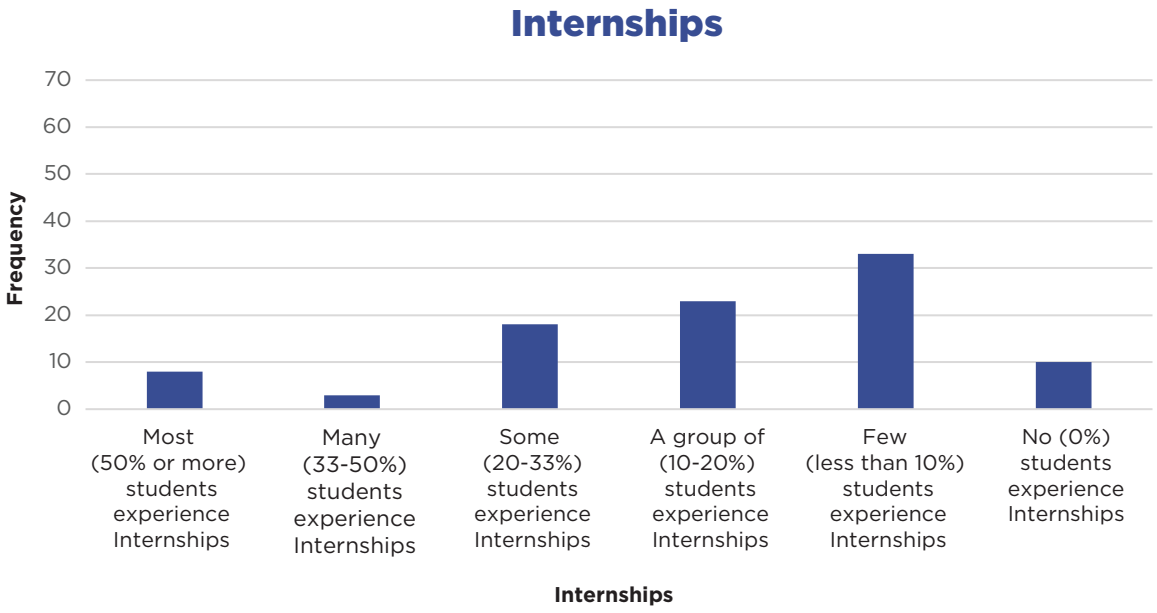
Figure 3 focuses on the more advanced Career Development Activities section of the Work-Based Learning Continuum. In Figure 3 below, one can see a very different pattern with nearly two-thirds of respondents stating that only some or few students in their organizations participate in Career Development Activities, such as Team-Based Challenges. Given the nature of these open-ended activities that require far more planning among educators and a greater shift from traditional classroom environments, though this is not necessarily the case in the vast majority of CTE classrooms which tend to feature hands-on, authentic, engaging activities for student learning, it is not as great a surprise to see that very few organizations are reporting that most or all or nearly all students are participating in such activities.

Figure 3. Percentage of Students Engaged in Career Development Activities



For figure 4 below, the answer options on the survey shifted to match the reality that far fewer students will be participating in activities on the right side of the Work-Based Learning Continuum, where this question was focused on internships as an entry into more detailed questions about both internships and apprenticeships. Surprisingly, to the research team, nearly 10% of respondents stated that 50% or more of their students participated in internships. Again, the reality with regards to this question is that it may simply be that the educational organizations in Illinois most likely to be deeply engaged in work-based learning may have also been more likely to take part in this survey. With approximately 40% of respondents stating that 20% or more of their students are participating in internships, that may be very surprising, and it again asks questions about how powerful it might be to be able to track this effectively each year and to know and understand historical data and to have an idea as to whether or not this data represents a shift that has resulted from the passage and implementation of the PWR Act and/or the move to Perkins V.

Figure 4. Percentage of Students Engaged in Internships



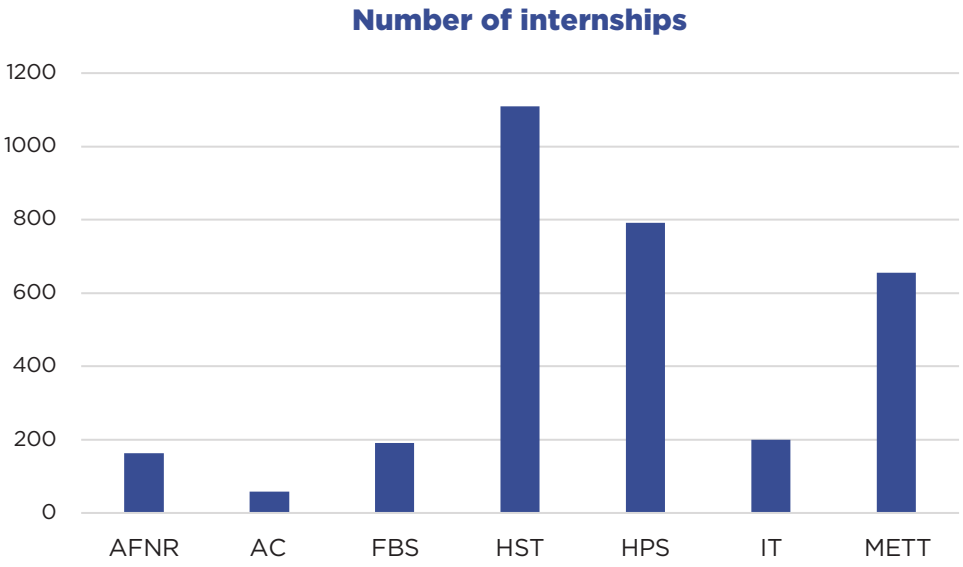
The survey also asked respondents about students paid and/or unpaid internship experiences. From the 100 respondents, 1,389 students participated in paid internship experiences. Unsurprisingly, the number of students in unpaid internship experiences was higher with 2,176 students in unpaid internship experiences. Based on the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity/United States Department of Labor data, there are another 673 students who were 18 or younger when they started their apprenticeships. These numbers do confidently represent the total number of Registered Apprenticeships, but they do not represent the wholeness of internships across Illinois. There is no single data source that can confidently represent that. In addition to the sample size from this survey, the research team has continued to remind itself that despite everyone's best intentions, local definitions among respondents for internships and apprenticeships may vary and could in some way impact the reported data.

For some context in the State of Illinois, there are approximately 130,000 to 150,000 students per grade level in Illinois with the high school grade levels last year being closer to 150,000 students per grade level. These responses here to these survey questions are likely to include eleventh and twelfth grade high school students and some number of postsecondary students. While the ISBE Work-Based Learning course enrollment data may shed additional light on this context, even with this relatively small sample size, the research team can confidently confirm that it is only a very small number of Illinois students who are participating in internships and apprenticeships.

As the state has also adopted the seven Career Pathways identified earlier, these Career Pathways are useful for analyzing the fields in which internships and apprenticeships are taking place. These Career Pathways, of course, integrate the existing Career Clusters, which have been mapped to each of the Pathways and which, in some cases, are identical to the Pathways. Likewise, the CIP Codes[23] can also be mapped accordingly to each of the Career Pathways.

Figure 5 below displays the number of internships that were reported by all survey respondents across all organization types by Career Pathway. The majority of internships took place in Health Sciences and Technology (35.0%), Human and Public Services (25.0%), and Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades (20.7%). These results are not entirely surprising as they mirror trends in ISBE College and Career Pathway Endorsements earned by Career Pathway. Additionally, this is particularly positive given workforce needs; Shortages in each of these Pathways are regularly documented everywhere from government commerce and labor data to academic journals to the mainstream media.

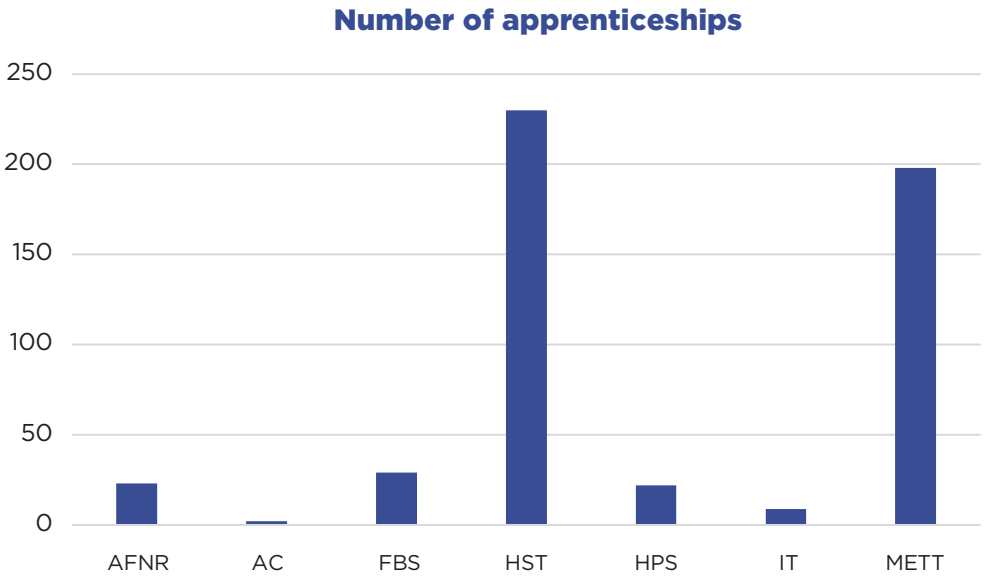
Figure 5. Reported Number of Internships by Career Pathway



[23] CIP Codes refer to *Classification of Instructional Program Codes*, and these are used to organize postsecondary programs of study in alignment with careers and industries. The full list of CIP Codes is available online from the National Center for Education Statistics at: https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/default.aspx?y=56

In examining the same type of data but for apprenticeships, a similar pattern can be identified with one significant exception as seen below in Figure 6. Like in the internship data above, apprenticeships comparatively abound in both the Health Sciences and Technology and Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades Pathways. The major difference between the number of internships and the number of apprenticeships by Pathway is visible in the Human and Public Services Career Pathway. Careers in Human and Public Services range from education to law enforcement and include many governmental careers as well as many social services careers. Knowing the emphasis school districts and community colleges have placed on developing and implementing paths for students who are interested in becoming educators, it is interesting to consider the traditional structures for the most complex and involved aspects of work-based learning in those fields, which typically come near or at the end of one's postsecondary studies through experiences like student teaching or long-term internships for school psychologists and school social workers. While school districts across Illinois have responded to ISBE's College and Career Pathway Endorsements with expanded programs for current high school students to begin having teaching opportunities alongside licensed educators while they are still in high school, in large part, the licensure model continues to require student teaching at the end of a bachelor's or master's degree. This reality may explain the difference in the distribution of internships and apprenticeships.

Figure 6. Reported Number of Apprenticeships by Career Pathway



As an important aside, the research team would also be remiss not to acknowledge here, once again, the reality that despite everyone's best intentions, the definitions utilized by survey respondents of what constitutes an internship and what constitutes an apprenticeship may vary. This reality is likely to have some impact on this data. Continued efforts to provide clarity in defining internships versus apprenticeships with practitioners in a wide variety of fields – from education to business to workforce development – should continue to improve the consistency and quality of data overtime.

Offering internships and apprenticeships is not possible without having business and community partners to offer positions to these interns and apprentices. Additionally, as everyone involved in workforce development and career readiness education understands, offering a high-quality internship or apprenticeship experience does require a certain level of commitment on the part of the business or community partner. Given this, it is important to track how many business and community partners can be identified by educational organizations. (The separate survey for business and community partners, outlined below, seeks to further understand the experiences of business and community partners with regards to apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning.)

In Table 10 below, unsurprisingly given the higher number of internships, respondents identified far more total partners for internships than for apprenticeships. At the same time, given the wide range of responses across the diverse communities throughout Illinois and given the range in the sizes of organizations that responded from exceedingly small organizations to very large organizations, there is a very high level of engagement. While the survey was remiss in asking organizations about the number of staff members and the nature of the positions of those staff members who are involved in work-based learning efforts, based on our experiences in the field, these positions tend to be very limited. In other words, hundreds of partnerships have been developed to create apprenticeships and internships by people who are often doing other full-time work in their organizations. If this apparent pattern is actually true, the numbers presented in Table 10 become all-the-more compelling to consider as does the question of what might happen if more organizations had dedicated and well-trained work-based learning staff.

Table 10. Number of Business and Community Partners Identified by Education Organization Survey Respondents

Experience Type	Total Number of Partners from All Respondents	Minimum Number of Partners Identified	Maximum Number of Partners Identified	Mean Number of Partners
Apprenticeships	149	0	30	2.8
Internships	945	0	100	16.0

For the remainder of this section, the analysis will focus on school districts that both responded to the survey and identified themselves in their responses. Why focus on the school districts specifically in this analysis? First, in our P-20 educational "system" (which, of course, is not really a system, at all), the end of twelfth grade is the last time that there is common access to all students across Illinois. This makes the importance of a smooth transition from eleventh and twelfth grades to postsecondary education and into the workforce critical. Second, realizing this point above, during the past decade policy efforts have been made to create smooth paths from high school to postsecondary and the workforce. While community colleges are also critical to these policy efforts, high schools are the only setting in which we know that all students can be impacted by such policy changes. Third, the survey of educational organizations for the SkillsUSA Illinois Apprenticeship landscape analysis study yielded 100 usable responses. To encourage participation in the study, it was distributed as an anonymous survey with the option for organizations to self-disclose. 34 responses featured no such disclosure. On the other hand, 51 school districts responded to the survey, and of those, 41 school districts did identify themselves making for a usable sample. Additionally, as described below, the diversity of school districts that responded allow this sample to effectively provide insight among the range of school districts in Illinois. Illinois has 851 school districts with three main structural types of districts, elementary districts (K-8 or Pre-K-8), secondary districts (9-12), and unit districts (K-12 or Pre-K-12). Of these 851 districts, 476 include grades 9-12. 41 responding districts is just over 8.6% of those school districts, and these respondents represent a wide mix of sizes and geographies of Illinois school districts. While smaller than hoped for, which will be addressed in the recommendations section of this report, the number and mix of districts who did respond and identify themselves does make this a very usable sample for further analysis.

Of the 41 school districts responding, this analysis will highlight these key district characteristics:

- District Size (Student Enrollment)
- Low Income Students
- EBF Adequacy Percentage
- NCES Locales[24]

[24] The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) classifies communities by Locale, ranging from city to suburban to town to rural. Within each of these four Locale categories, there are three sub-categories, resulting in a total of 12 different Locale categories. More information can be seen on the NCES website at: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/edge/Geographic/LocaleBoundaries

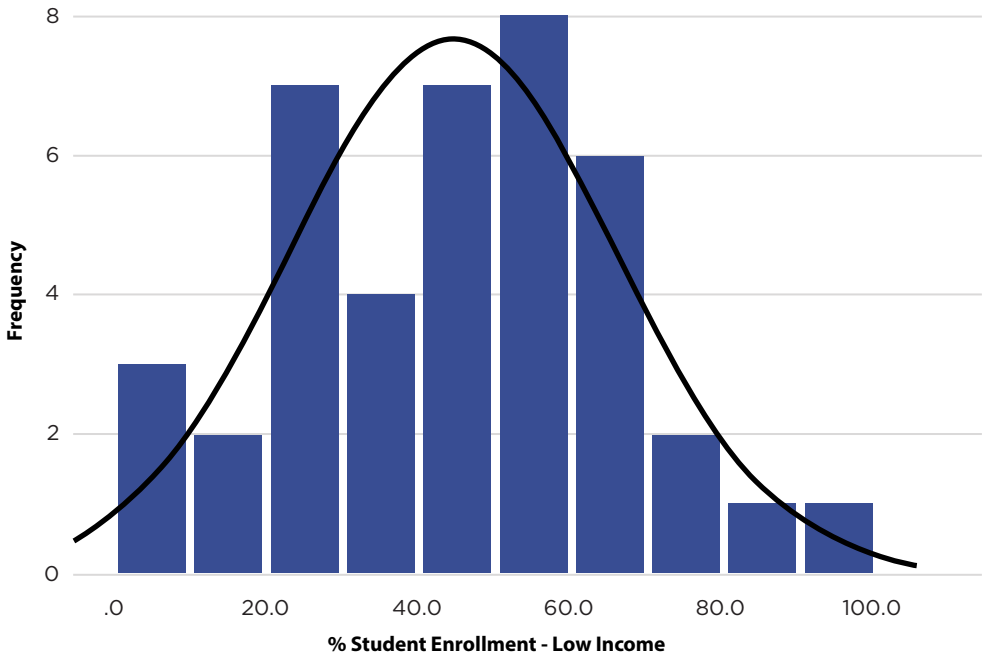
In this analysis, the research team, again, utilizes student enrollment, this time at the school district-level, as well as the EBF Adequacy Percentage and the NCES Locales. Additionally, this analysis also includes the percentage of students who are identified as coming from households considered low income. Work-based learning opportunities may still be harder to access for students who are from families that are identified as low income. Whether it is needing specific clothing or footwear to participate in a work-based learning experience or if transportation is a barrier to work-based learning, having less money available at home to support these efforts is a very real potential barrier to having students engage in work-based learning.

Before diving into the actual work-based learning data from the school districts that responded to the survey, it is important to first understand that, even though this represents only 41 school districts that responded and self-identified, this is a very diverse group of districts and well-representative of districts across Illinois.

In looking at the size of these school districts, student enrollment is the measure, and enrollment for this study has been defined as just grades 9-12. This allows us to compare across secondary (9-12) and unit (PK-12, K-12) districts as well as being the most relevant grades for work-based learning experiences and, particularly, for apprenticeships and internships, which are most likely to take place in grades 11 and 12. The smallest school district in terms of student enrollment had 68 students in grades 9-12 in 2023-2024, and the largest school district had 11,399 students in grades 9-12 in 2023-2024. The mean enrollment was 1,982 students in grades 9-12, and the median enrollment was 996 students in grades 9-12.

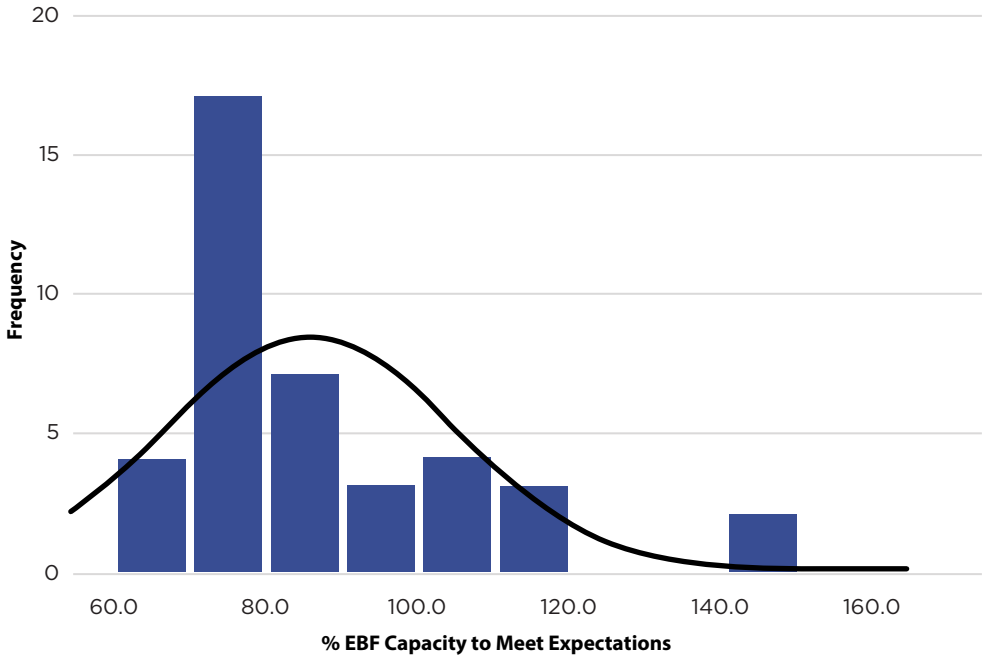
While there was a very wide range of school district sizes, there was an equally wide range of the diversity of students in terms of family income. The school district with the fewest number of students identified as low income had only 4.8% of its students categorized as such. On the other hand, the school district with the highest percentage of low income students had 98.5% of students that were labeled as low income students during the 2023-2024 school year. The mean percentage of low income students was 44.6%, and the median percentage of low income students was 47.0%. Figure 7 below shows the diversity of the distribution of school districts' percentages of students who come from low income households.

Figure 7. School District Distribution across Percentage of Low Income Students, Self-Identified School Districts that Responded to the Education Organization Survey



There was a wide-range of school district funding levels as defined by their percentage of funding in comparison to each district's Adequacy Target, or their EBF Adequacy Percent. Figure 8 below displays the distribution of school districts' Adequacy Percents from the 41 districts who responded to the survey and self-identified. Approximately half of the school districts that responded and self-identified have fairly low EBF Adequacy Percentages at less than 80% of their Adequacy Targets. When you also factor in those that are below the State's goal of funding districts at least at 90% of their Adequacy Targets, this graph along with the data that will be shared further into this analysis demonstrates that there are many school districts providing meaningful work-based learning experiences despite being resource-challenged.

Figure 8. School District Distribution of EBF Adequacy Percent, Self-Identified School Districts that Responded to the Education Organization Survey



In looking at the diversity of school districts across geography and community type, the Locales are instructive to see how diverse this group of responding and self-identifying school districts is. While the actual locations of individual districts are being kept confidential as part of the research process, responses ranged from districts across Illinois, including districts who exist within a short drive of the Wisconsin border and districts who are located near the Ohio River and border with Kentucky. Table 11 below displays the number of districts in each Locale.

Table 11. School Districts per Locale, Self-Identified School Districts that Responded to the Education Organization Survey

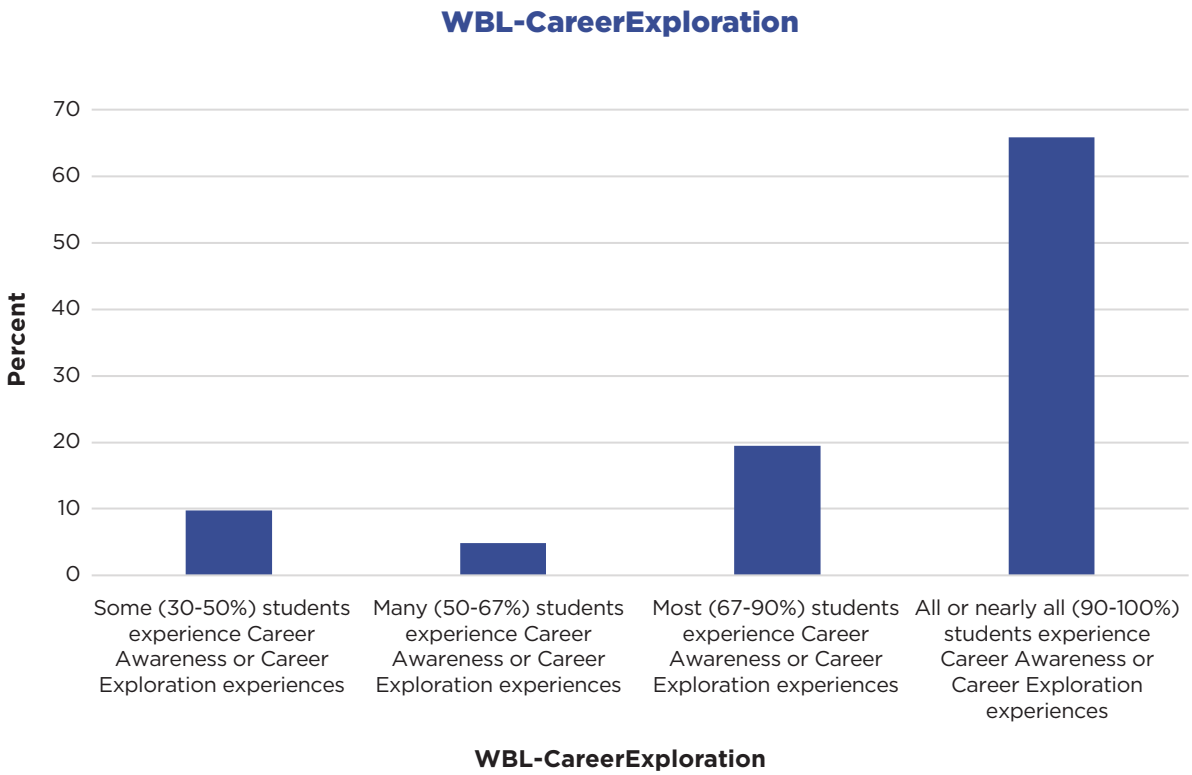
Locale	Number of School District Respondents
City – Large	0 (0%)
City – Midsize	2 (4.9%)
City – Small	1 (2.4%)
Suburban – Large	17 (41.5%)
Suburban – Midsize	3 (7.3%)
Suburban – Small	0 (0%)
Town – Fringe	6 (14.6%)
Town – Distant	4 (9.8%)
Town – Remote	0 (0%)
Rural – Fringe	1 (2.4%)
Rural – Distant	7 (17.1%)
Rural – Remote	0 (0%)

With the diversity of districts that have both responded to the survey and self-identified, the analysis can now turn its attention to examining the survey responses just for these school districts. Again, this is particularly important since high school is the last component of compulsory education when there is a single system that provides access to nearly all[25] students.

[25] Referring to "nearly all" students is an acknowledgement that there are students in both private school and homeschool settings. Of course, the families of these students have the opportunity for these students to participate in the public school setting if they so choose. At the same time, from a research perspective, it is important to acknowledge that there are students in grades 9-12 in settings outside of the public school district.

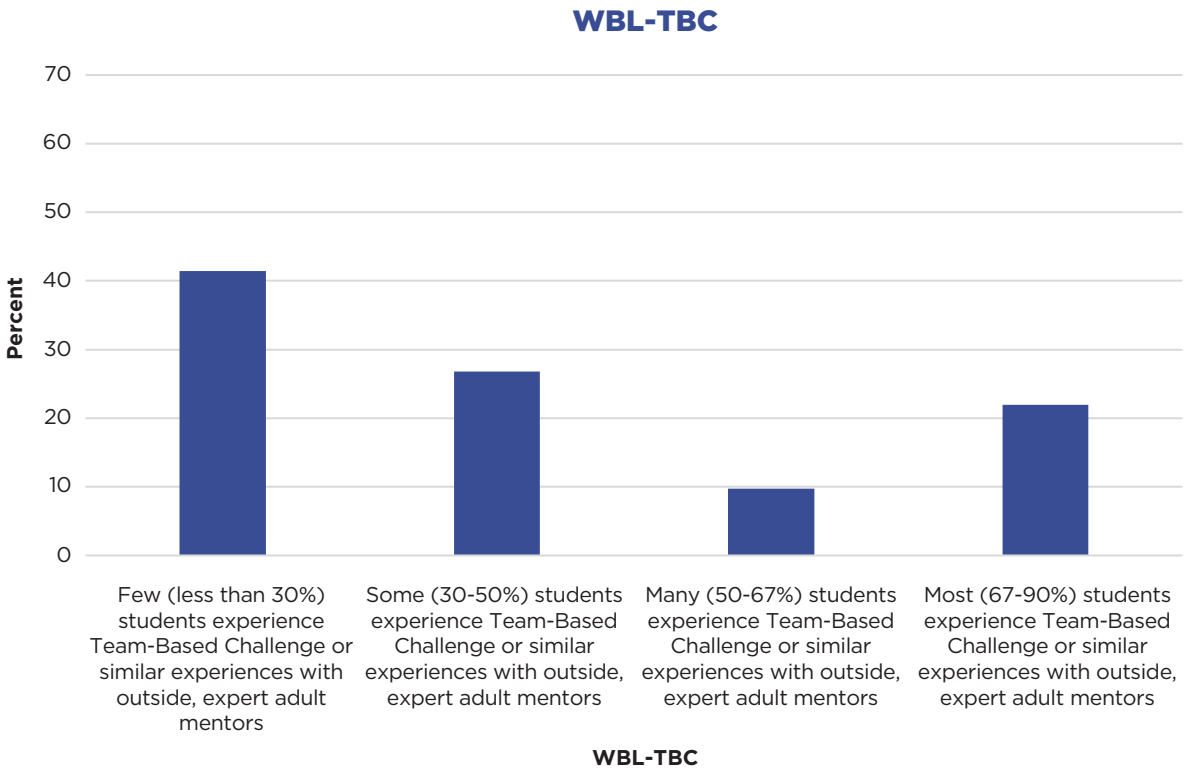
Figure 9 below displays the number of responding school districts in each category regarding the percentage of their students who engage in Career Awareness or Career Exploration activities. Unsurprisingly, this data matches the overall survey responses to this question previously identified. While Career Awareness and Career Exploration activities are the least in-depth and time-consuming components of the Work-Based Learning Continuum, they are an important starting point for all students, and as can be seen in the data, all of the districts are providing these activities to at least some students and nearly all of the districts are providing these type of activities to the vast majority of students. While there remains room for increases, even among the districts that completed the survey and self-identified and likely even more so among other districts, many students are experiencing these activities. With the PaCE Framework requirement starting on July 1, 2025, these numbers are likely to increase further in the coming years.

Figure 9. School District Distribution of the Percent of Students Experiencing Career Exploration Activities, Self-Identified School Districts that Responded to the Education Organization Survey



The next layer of questioning focused on more involved activities on the Work-Based Learning Continuum, such as Team-Based Challenges and other activities that involve outside adult mentors from the career field. Unsurprisingly, far more school districts identified that fewer students engage in these type of activities, which was expected by the research team. While these type of activities are not uncommon in Career and Technical Education classrooms, such types of open-ended, collaborative student projects that seek to solve authentic problems and to engage with experts from industry are more rare outside of CTE classrooms. At the same time, the publication of formal rules through ISBE in support of the College and Career Pathway Endorsements has provided explicit direction regarding Team-Based Challenges and with corresponding professional development taking place along with the publication of support materials by ISBE, there are more resources today than ever before for all teachers across high schools throughout Illinois to begin to integrate Team-Based Challenges into their instruction.

Figure 10. School District Distribution of the Percent of Students Experiencing Team-Based Challenges and Similar Activities, Self-Identified School Districts that Responded to the Education Organization Survey



Notably, for a study focused on apprenticeships and internships, Team-Based Challenges also provide a significant opportunity for business and community partners to become involved with school districts in their area with a lower level of commitment initially in terms of both time and resources. Serving as outside expert partners for Team-Based Challenges can be done with less time and less energy than bringing students in as apprentices or interns. Team-Based Challenges provide a perfect platform for business and community partners to begin to build relationships with educators as well as to experience direct work with students in the context of a meaningful instructional experience.

Figure 11. School District Distribution of the Percent of Students Experiencing Internships – Paid or Unpaid, Self-Identified School Districts that Responded to the Education Organization Survey

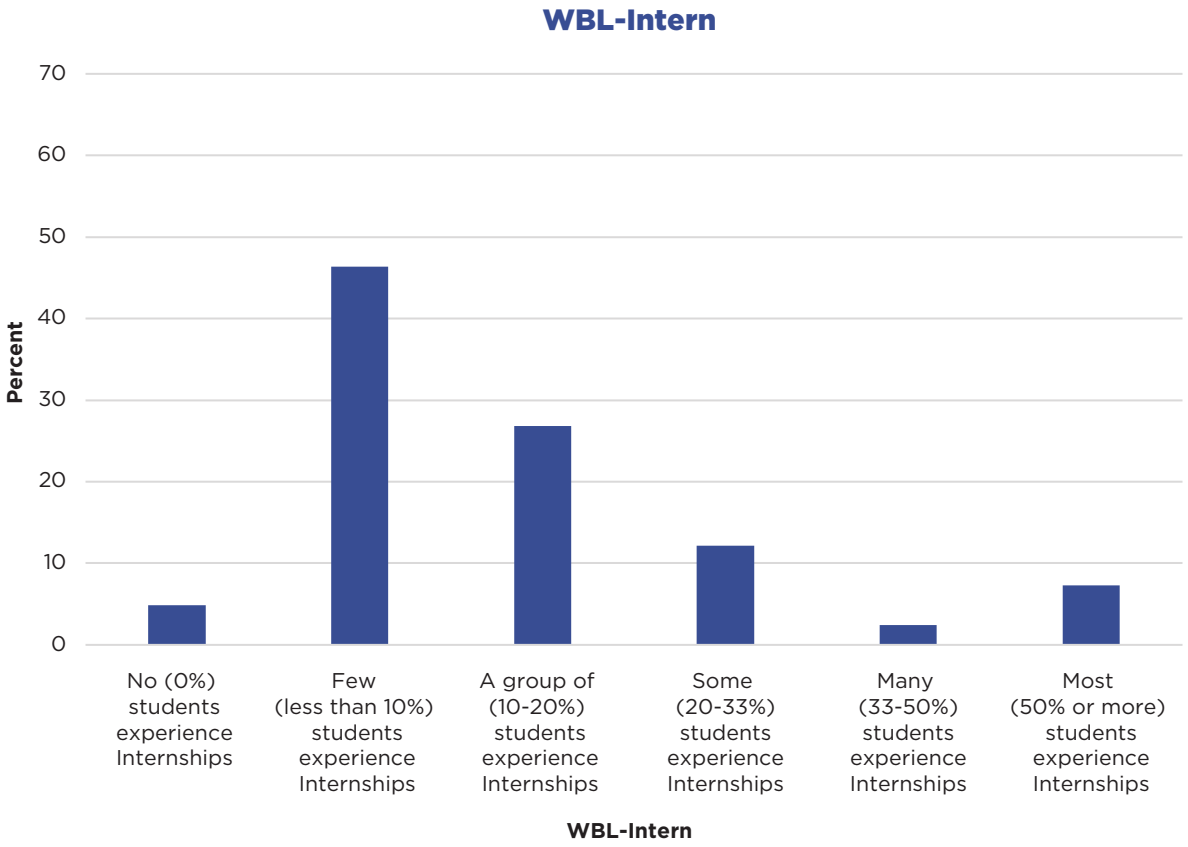


Figure 11 above may prove to be one of the most important snapshots in terms of providing baseline data for the future as this provides a picture of school districts' responses regarding what percent of students in their districts are engaged with internships. Given the confines of the traditional high school day of 7, 8, or 9 periods and the current school year in most school districts from mid-August through late-May, finding time to create internship opportunities for students can be a challenge. The consistent increase in ISBE College and Career Pathway Endorsements previously articulated in this report certainly accounts for increases in internships over the past five years, though having separate and clear data on that has not taken place. To a large degree, this should be captured through ISBE's collection of course enrollment data from the Work-Based Learning courses, which should align closely with the experiences that would normally be defined as internship experiences.

Comparing the internship data further, of the 39 self-identified school districts that responded to questions about paid internships, nearly half had 0 students in paid internships. On the other hand, there were two districts that responded that they had 100 students in paid internships, and one district responded that it had 154 students in paid internships. The mean number of paid internships was 18.4, though the median number of internships was 2. The pattern of students in unpaid internships was surprisingly similar to the pattern for paid internships. The same percentage of districts identified having 0 students in unpaid internships while the district with the most unpaid internships had 230 students participating in unpaid internships. The mean number of unpaid internships was higher at 20.8, and the median number of unpaid internships was 6.

Table 12 below shows data about the number of paid and unpaid internships by Career Pathway with the highest Pathways again being Human and Public Services followed by Health Sciences and Technology and by Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades. In the case of each Career Pathway, there are districts that have reported no internships, and there is a wide range in the maximum number of internships by Pathway. With 230 internships in Human and Public Services, that extreme across all Pathways is probably representative of education-related internships. These are, of course, the easiest internships for a school district to implement because the school district is either the partner itself or it may also be working with neighboring school districts, particularly in the case of a secondary school district that serves grades 9-12 also sending its students to serve as interns in its sender elementary school districts. When school districts are able to place students in meaningful internships within the district, including in areas other than education such as Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades, Information Technology, Arts and Communications, and Finance and Business Services, there are opportunities for the most frictionless internship arrangements.

Table 12. Number of Internships (Paid or Unpaid) by Career Pathway[26], Self-Identified School Districts that Responded to the Education Organization Survey

Pathway	AFNR	AC	FBS	HST	HPS	IT	METT
n	**33**	**33**	**33**	**33**	**35**	**31**	**35**
Smallest number of internships (paid or unpaid)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Largest of internships (paid or unpaid)	10	10	50	36	230	60	80
Mean of internships (paid or unpaid)	2.50	1.24	3.42	7.21	15.03	4.19	8.29
Median of internships (paid or unpaid)	0.50	0.00	0.00	1.00	5.00	0.00	3.00

Table 13 below displays the same data based on apprenticeships. What is most notable about Table 13 is the second row of data – how many districts are actually reporting apprenticeships. This number is very small, though notably higher when it comes to Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades, where apprenticeships have been a more traditional part of the career development and training process for students. Based on the pattern of responses to the survey questions about internships versus apprenticeships, in which, consistently, fewer school districts even responded to the questions about apprenticeships, school districts are less knowledgeable about and less engaged with apprenticeships than with internships, possibly even at an awareness level. This is not necessarily a negative on the part of school districts as they have increasingly had their responsibilities directed toward internships, particularly with the implementation of the ISBE College and Career Pathway Endorsements, but it also may present an opportunity to build knowledge and increase awareness among school districts with regards to apprenticeships.

Table 13. Number of Apprenticeships by Career Pathway, Self-Identified School Districts that Responded to the Education Organization Survey

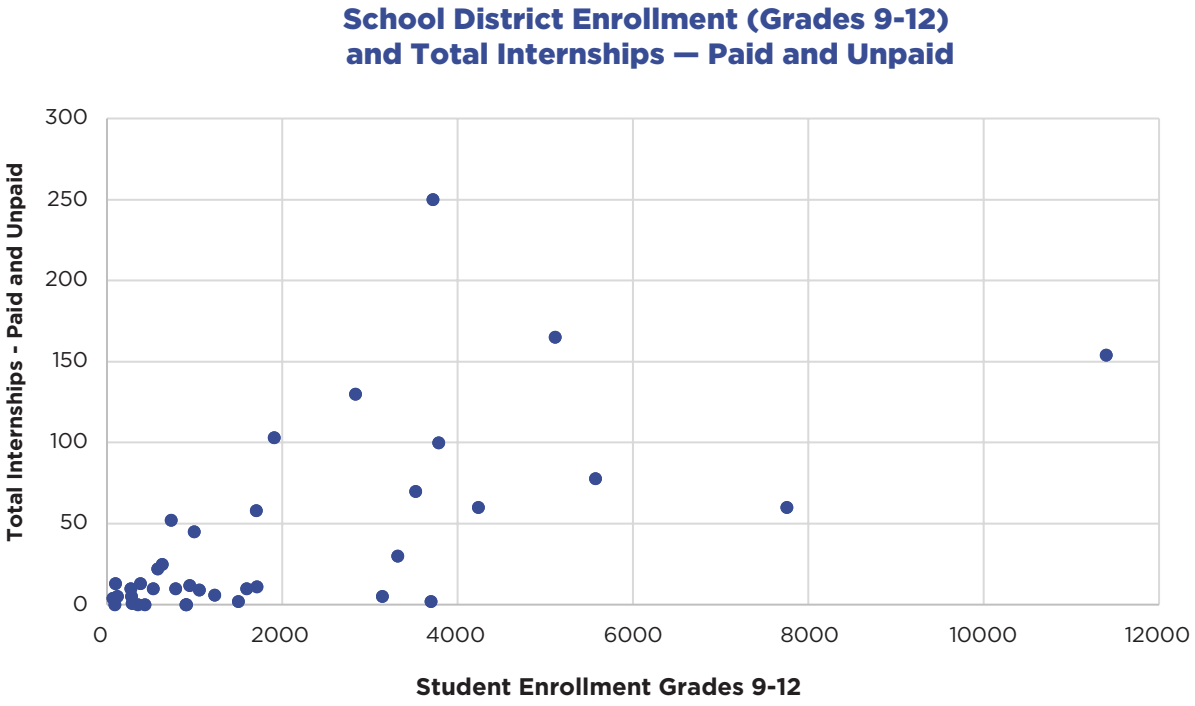
Pathway	AFNR	AC	FBS	HST	HPS	IT	METT
n	**33**	**33**	**32**	**33**	**32**	**33**	**36**
Number of districts reporting apprenticeships	2	0	1	0	1	0	11
Smallest number of apprenticeships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Largest of apprenticeships	10	0	22	0	2	0	10
Mean of apprenticeships	0.39	0.00	0.67	0.00	0.06	0.00	1.47
Median of apprenticeships	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

[26] Career Pathway abbreviations – AFNR: Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources; AC: Arts and Communications; FBS: Finance and Business Services; HST: Health Sciences and Technology; HPS: Human and Public Services; IT: Information Technology; METT: Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades

Finally, we sought to analyze the previously outlined school district characteristics with the number of apprenticeships and internships to identify whether or not patterns emerged. If certain school district characteristics were more or less likely to lead to higher or lower numbers of apprenticeships, that would then be the foundation for additional research into why that was the case and what policy mechanisms might help improve such conditions for all school districts and for students in communities across Illinois.

To begin this analysis, we took the intentionally overly simplistic approach of examining the number of paid and unpaid internships against the size of the school districts based on student enrollment. One might expect that larger districts would have higher numbers of students enrolled in internships. At the most extreme case, even if every ninth through twelfth grader in the smallest district was serving as an intern, there would be more than three times as many students just serving as Human and Public Services interns in one of the other school districts. At the same time, by using a scatterplot, it is easy to identify outliers, small districts with large numbers of interns and large districts with small numbers of interns (or with no interns at all). Figure 12 below shows this scatterplot, and one can see that there certainly are larger districts with fewer interns and smaller districts with more interns than one might expect. At the same time, the scatterplot generally follows the pattern that one would expect to see with higher numbers of interns being in districts with more students.

Figure 12. Scatterplot of Number of Interns and School District Enrollment Size (Grades 9-12), Self-Identified School Districts that Responded to the Education Organization Survey



From there, we created two new metrics to be able to examine the number of apprenticeships and the number of internships against the size of the school district based on student enrollment. These figures are represented on a scale from 0 to 1, with 0 representing a school district with no apprenticeships or internships and with 1 representing a school district in which every student has an apprenticeship or internship. In reality, even among the districts with the largest numbers of students participating in these most involved aspects of work-based learning, very few students are working as interns and even fewer are serving as apprentices. These numbers are quite small, but they serve as a very important baseline that can be used moving forward as better and more data is collected across Illinois regarding internships, in particular, and as we work to collect data about apprenticeships that can be better tied to students formal schooling experiences in high schools and community colleges, possibly through the continued and expanded implementation of the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS). Table 14 provides an overview of these initial data points for the Apprenticeship-Enrollment Metric and the Internship-Enrollment Metric.

Table 14. Apprenticeships and Internships in the Context of School District Enrollments (Grades 9-12), Self-Identified School Districts that Responded to the Education Organization Survey

Metric	Lowest Scoring District(s)	Highest Scoring District(s)	Mean	Median
Apprenticeship – Enrollment Metric	0.0000	0.0417	0.0030	0.0000
Internship – Enrollment Metric	0.0000	0.1327	0.0245	0.0141

What Table 14 describes today is only of limited value, but over time, the value of this metric can increase significantly. In the future, this can be used to show increases and decreases in the number of apprenticeships and internships relative to enrollment regardless of changes in student enrollment. Additionally, over time, along with other research, both quantitative and qualitative, this metric will likely be able to serve as one component of benchmarking high-quality apprenticeship and internship programs in relation to school districts in the context of Illinois and its unique communities, systems, and structures.

As the last part of this analysis, and utilizing both the Apprenticeship-Enrollment Metric and the Internship-Enrollment Metric, the research team conduct regression analysis that included an examination of school size, the percentage of students from low income households, and the school district's EBF Adequacy Percentage. The goal of this analysis was to determine if any of these was a unique and statistically significant predictor of the Metrics. From that analysis, the research team learned that, at this time and based on this survey data, there is no statistically significant correlation between any of these metrics and the identified school districts in this survey. Based on our professional experiences, we expect that these results likely indicate that, at the moment, district and community leadership is the key ingredient to creating and implementing work-based learning opportunities for students regardless of community. Even with this statistical result, the research team also acknowledges that, all other things being equal, communities with greater resources will have a greater likelihood of being able to increase more work-based learning opportunities for students (and to potentially do so in more equitable ways).

Business and community partners survey data results

There were 74 organizations that opened the business and community partners survey. Of those organizations, 50 responses were incomplete and could not be used. Several of these cases involved organizations that left an incomplete response and returned to start and complete a new survey. After removing incomplete responses, 24 responses were available for analysis.

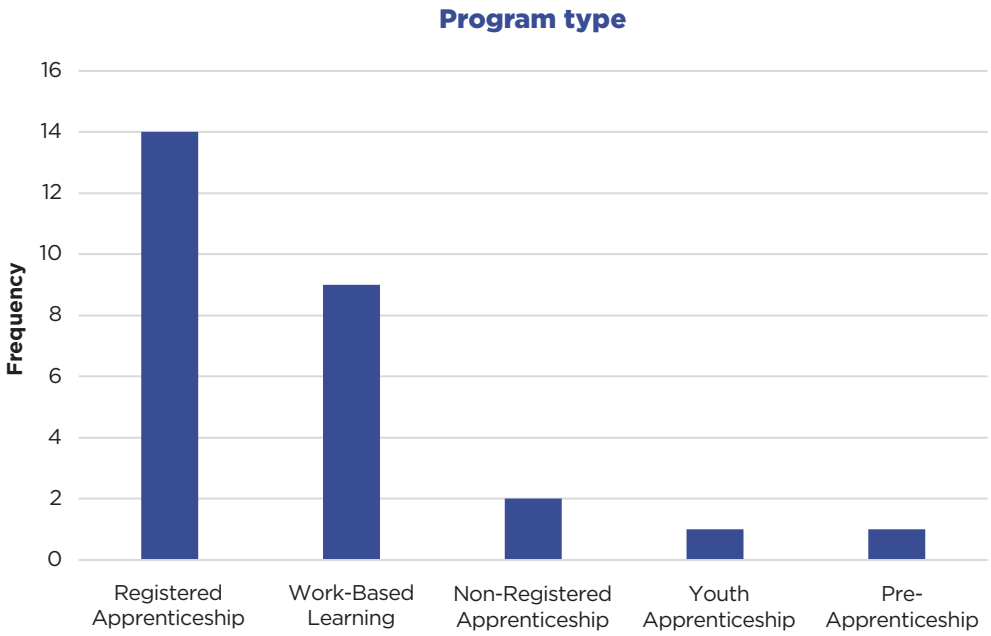
The responses by organization type were as follows:

- Employer - 14
- Union - 4
- Industry Association - 1
- Local Workforce Area - 1
- Non-profit - 1
- Other - 2

Organizations responding had the opportunity to provide information about multiple programs. Four organizations reported that they had an additional program. One organization did not host a program but assisted other organizations with their apprenticeship or work-based learning programs. The survey collected information about 28 programs.

Figure 13 displays counts of apprenticeship and work-based learning programs. Half of the programs are Registered Apprenticeships. Four other programs are other types of apprenticeships, including non-registered, youth, and pre-apprenticeships. The remaining nine programs were work-based learning such as career awareness, exploration, team-based challenge, internships, or career development experience.

Figure 13. Types of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Programs



Nearly two-thirds of those entering a USDOL Registered Apprenticeship program in 2024 are employed in the construction trades. One of the priorities of the IWIB Apprenticeship Illinois Committee has been to diversify the sectors for apprenticeships and work-based learning. Apprenticeships in production and installation occupations, typically found in manufacturing settings, make up about 15% of the total.

The occupational focus of the programs are displayed in Figure 14 below. Manufacturing is the focus of nearly half of the programs. There were also several responses from programs that prepared participants for multiple occupational opportunities.

The programs focused on manufacturing, medical, repair, and business/financial were all run by individual employers. Construction apprenticeships were primarily associated with labor unions. Finally, those with multiple programs were workforce intermediaries such as local workforce areas or community based organizations.

Figure 14. Occupational Focus of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Programs

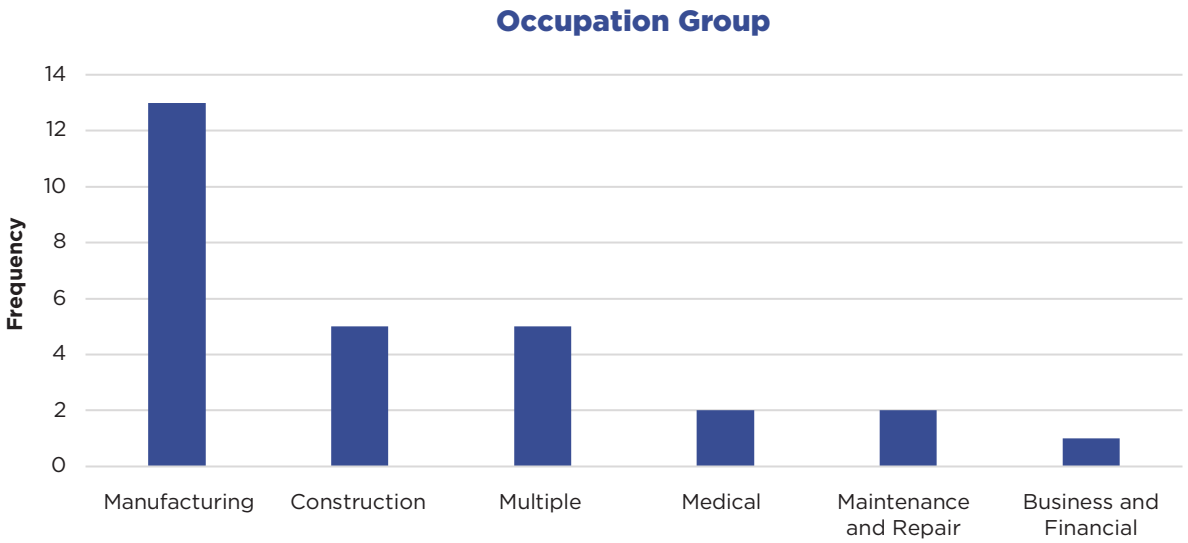


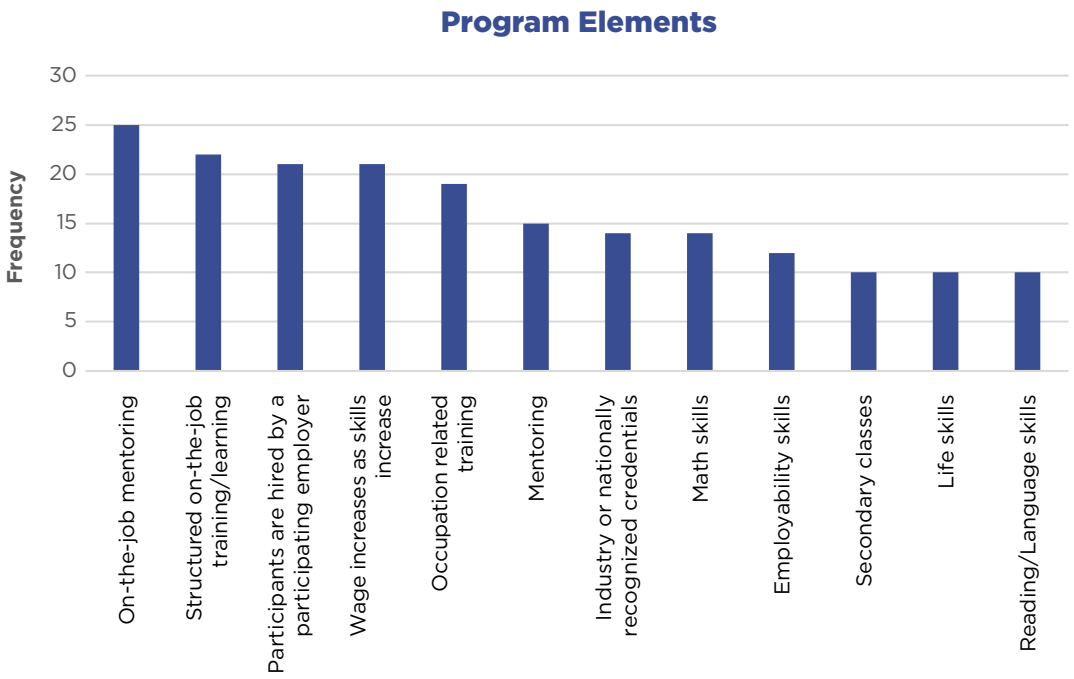
Figure 15 displays the programmatic elements of the apprenticeship and work-based learning programs. Of the 28 programs included in the survey responses, 25 provide on-the-job mentoring. The remaining three indicated that they had structured on-the-job training/learning.

USDOL Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs require the following programmatic elements:

- Employer Involvement
- Structured On-the-Job Learning
- Related Technical Instruction
- Progressive Wage Increases
- Nationally Recognized Credential

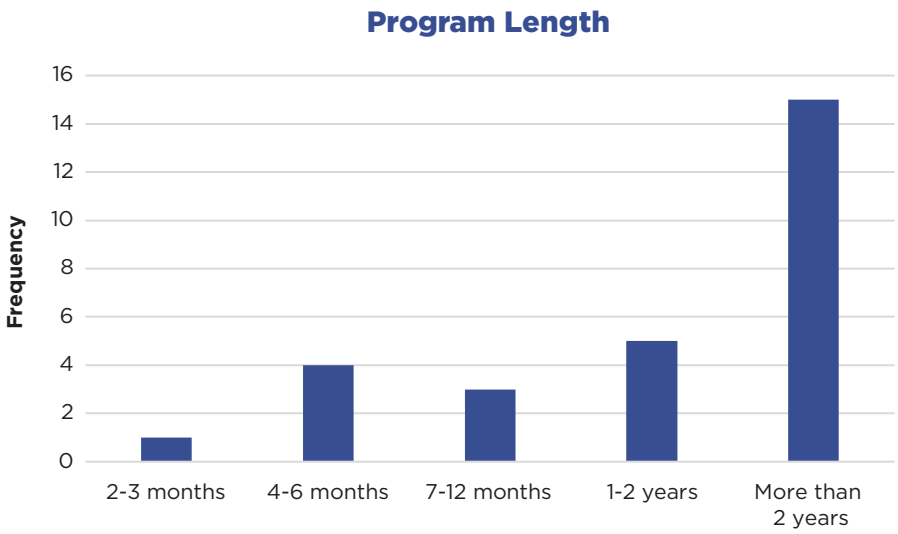
Most (16) of the programs indicated all components of a DOL RA program. Another nine include four of the five components

Figure 15. Programmatic Elements of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Programs



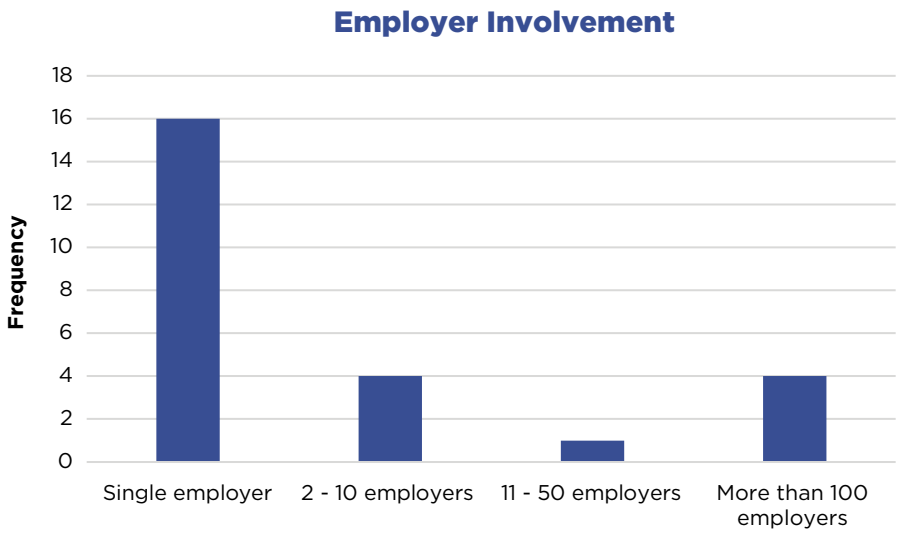
Most programs last more than two years (Figure 16). Nearly all of these programs were registered or non-registered apprenticeships in manufacturing, construction, or medial occupations. The shorter programs are primarily focused on work-based learning for youth participants.

Figure 16. Length of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Programs



Just over half of the programs had a single employer involved (Figure 17). All of those programs were internal programs for those employers. Those programs with large numbers of employers involved were run by construction sector labor unions.

Figure 17. Employer Involvement in Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Programs

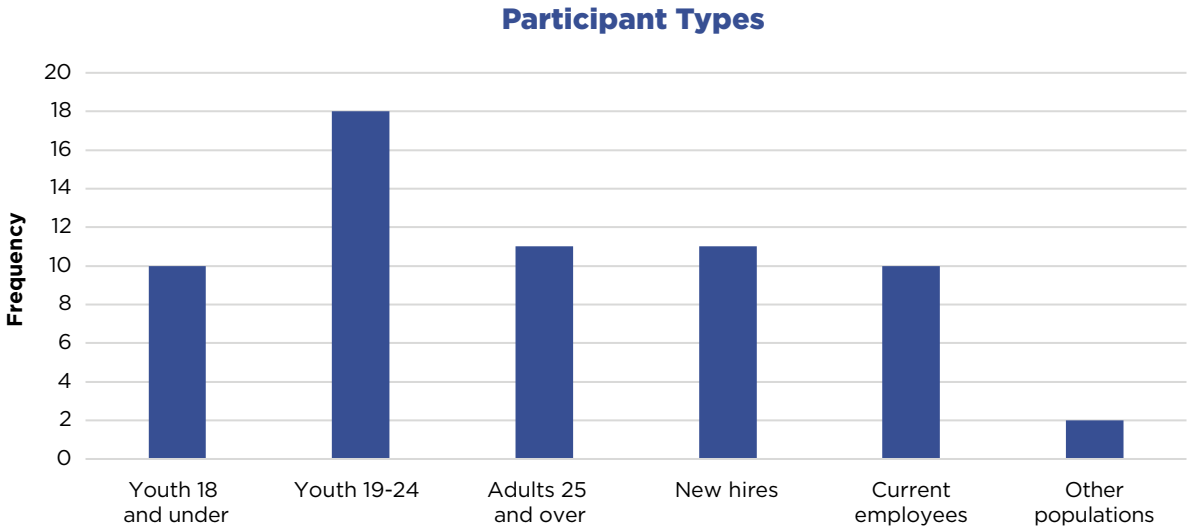


The numbers of staff involved in mentoring, training, and/or administering the programs are summarized in Figure 18. The programs with fewer than five staff involved were primarily hosted by single employers. Those with larger staff involvement tended to be unions and large employers.

Figure 18. Staff Involved in Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Programs

The types of participants targeted by the programs are displayed in Figure 19. Youth 19-24 years old is the most common target participant. Most programs include multiple participant types. All programs that focus on adults also include youth 19-24. Likewise, most programs that target new hires include multiple age ranges.

Figure 19. Participant Types in Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Programs



Most programs have relatively small participant counts (Figure 20). The larger programs are primarily labor unions and a youth pre-apprenticeship program that covers multiple school districts. Those with 10 or fewer participants were all run by individual employers.

Figure 20. Participant Counts in Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Programs

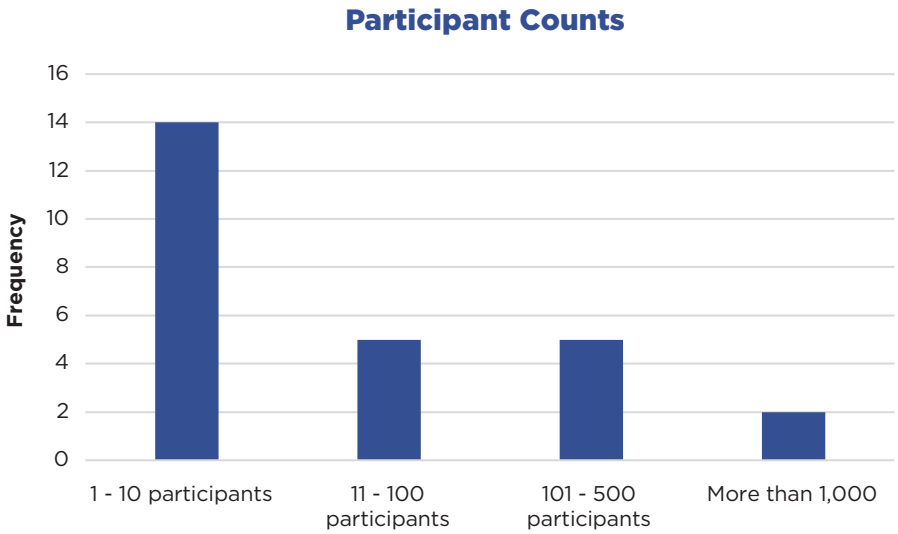
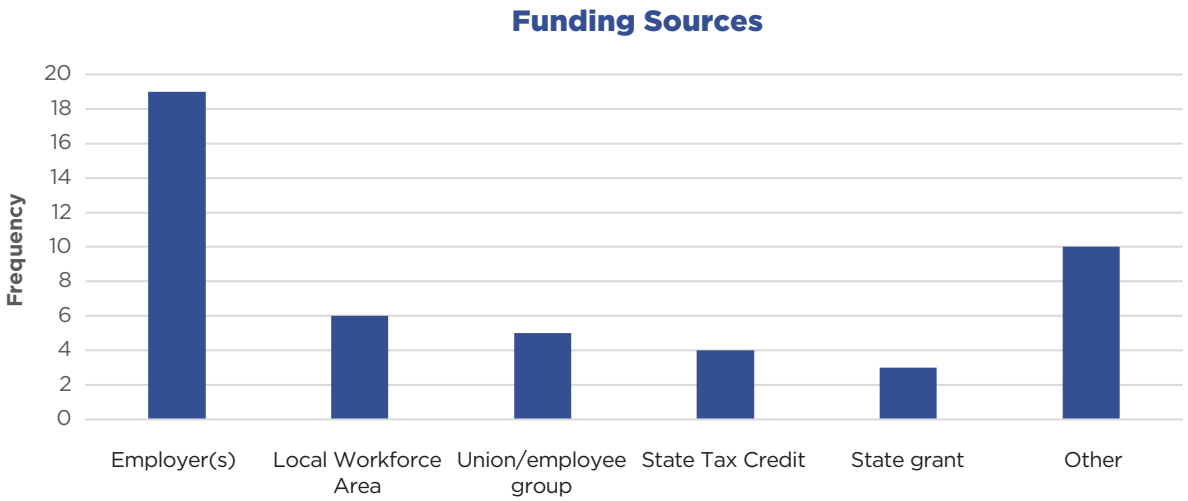


Figure 21 displays funding sources used by apprenticeship and work-based learning programs. Employer funding is used in more than half of the programs. Four employer-funded programs also indicate that they receive the state tax credit. Four union programs indicate that they are funded jointly by the union and employers.

Figure 21. Funding Sources for Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Programs



The results from the data reveal several key themes shaping the landscape of work-based learning and apprenticeships in Illinois. While construction continues to dominate apprenticeship participation, growth in non-traditional sectors like healthcare, education, and IT signals increasing diversification among "non-traditional" occupations. Demographic shifts highlight greater representation of non-white apprentices, though female participation remains disproportionately low, particularly in higher-paying fields. The data also underscore the underutilization of internships and advanced career activities, along with persistent equity gaps in unpaid work-based learning opportunities. These trends point to both significant progress and critical challenges in creating equitable and accessible pathways for career development.

Registered Apprenticeship Trends by Occupation and Industry

Construction accounts for 75% of all registered apprenticeships, with 16,149 active apprentices as of December 2024. However, its share of new apprenticeships declined from 74% (2019) to 65% (2024), signaling diversification in apprenticeship offerings.

Growth in sectors like healthcare, education, computer/math, and office/administrative support is notable. Healthcare support apprenticeships grew significantly, with an 80% increase in female and non-white participants. Construction dominates, but public administration, educational services, and professional/scientific services are growing sectors. Apprenticeship entries have rebounded strongly since the pandemic, especially in non-traditional sectors. Growth across healthcare, education, and computer/math indicates potential for expanding work-based learning in these fields.

Demographic Shifts and Diversity

The share of non-white registered apprentices grew from 36% (2019) to 46% (2024), surpassing the state workforce benchmark of 38%. Female participation remains low at 14%, especially in construction and installation/maintenance, where females represent only 6%. Females and non-white apprentices are overrepresented in lower-paying sectors (e.g., healthcare support) compared to higher-paying sectors (e.g., healthcare practitioners, technical roles). Emerging sectors are more diverse. Sectors such as healthcare and computer/math have higher female and non-white representation, reflecting a shift toward inclusion.

Growth in Work-Based Learning Participation

Over 60% of survey respondents report that nearly all students experience career exploration activities, such as job shadowing and guest speakers. Approximately 40% of students at surveyed institutions participate in internships, with a majority in unpaid roles. Apprenticeships for students aged 18 or younger accounted for 673 participants. Paid internships are less common than unpaid ones (1,389 vs. 2,176 participants).

Challenges in Work-Based Learning Implementation

There is limited participation in advanced career activities. Career development activities and team-based challenges are less common, with only a minority of students participating. Internships and apprenticeships remain underutilized, representing a small fraction of total student experiences. Definitions of internships and apprenticeships vary across institutions, affecting data consistency. ISBE data limitations (e.g., cohort size <10 students excluded) hinder comprehensive reporting.

Equity Gaps in Internship Experiences

Unpaid internships are predominant. The prevalence of unpaid internships may disadvantage underrepresented groups, further exacerbating inequities. There are significant sector-based inequities. Non-white and female participants are concentrated in lower-paying roles and sectors. More equitable participation is observed in newer apprenticeship sectors like computer/math and education.

Increase meaningful data collection, and support for meaningful data collection, around career readiness
One key finding of the research team is how challenging it is to capture valid and reliable data around career readiness activities from school districts and postsecondary institutions. While school districts annually upload more data to ISBE and the story is similar for postsecondary institutions to ICCB and IBHE, there is not actionable data regarding how much time students are engaged in work-based learning settings or what the quality of those engagements looks like or who students are engaged with from workplace partners. The only real metrics that are available are:

- How many students earn College and Career Pathway Endorsements, from which researchers can determine that each student completed at least two Team-Based Challenges with outside expert mentors from the career field and one internship of at least 60 hours
- Work-Based Learning course enrollment data, which has replaced the co-op data that was previously captured by ISBE through the annual upload of course enrollment data by all school districts across Illinois

While researchers and, arguably, educators and the public would benefit from this additional data, the research team also understands that very few school districts in Illinois can be asked to collect and report more data without funding for the human and technological resources to support these efforts. It may be possible to support such efforts through increased funding of Education for Employment system regions or through the Regional Offices of Education, so it is not as necessary for each district to have such resources in-house. Of course, implementing work-based learning itself is incredibly complex, and certainly school districts across Illinois, even in the most well-resourced school districts, find themselves wishing that they had more counselors. Increases in staffing in either or both of these areas, while not an overnight solution, could allow for more resources to support work-based learning and, possibly, along with that, the collection of such data. Either way, there is a critical need for more data, and this need can only be accomplished with greater resources to support these efforts. While everyone that is involved in advocating for career readiness and for CTE wants to, and should, focus that advocacy on increasing actual opportunities, this study has laid bare the reality that the infrastructure to support such efforts must also be improved.

Continued and increased professional development related to apprenticeships and internships
While certainly a challenging task given the nature of large and small businesses across Illinois as well as the wide range of school districts and postsecondary institutions across Illinois, working together across agencies and professional and advocacy organizations to continue to provide training to businesses and community partners of all sizes as well as to educators in high schools and postsecondary institutions regarding the various types of work-based learning arrangements and the benefits and considerations of each is absolutely necessary. While not unique to Illinois or to 2025, workforce development experts cannot even be certain that practitioners in the field, in business or industry or education, actually are using the same underlying definitions when using the same terminology. This is, of course, just a starting place for such professional development. Illinois has a great opportunity to leverage the outstanding work that is already taking place across Career Pathways and in communities across Illinois to identify leaders from both business and industry and from education who can stand alongside agency staff members and members of professional organizations to lead such professional development in-person in communities across Illinois as well as online. Based on practical experience in the field, even more than the need for resources or policy, there may primarily be a need for leadership and collaboration in this space in order to make this come to fruition as there are already so many individuals and organizations effectively doing this work within their current spaces that the primary need here is for coordination and increased visibility. The research team will suggest that funding for a large-scale public marketing campaign may be very effective on the heels of increased and expanded training regarding apprenticeships and internships across all sectors.

Further study of infrastructure around work-based learning in both educational settings and in business and community organizations

This initial landscape analysis was focused primarily on the experiences of individuals moving through the education and training processes into the workforce. There were not questions asked of either educational organizations or of community and business partners about the degree to which they have developed internal infrastructure to support high-quality, in-depth, and (often) complex work-based learning experiences for people like apprenticeships and internships. Such necessary infrastructure would include, but not necessarily be limited to: staff dedicated to and expert in developing and supporting apprentices and interns, specific onboarding systems and processes for apprentices and interns who are not only new to the field but are often new to the workplace, staff and resources who can provide ongoing professional development for apprentices and interns alongside their actual apprenticeships and internships to maximize those experiences, and staff and resources to support the ongoing professional development of full-time staff who are serving as mentors to apprentices and interns. Specifically for educational institutions, infrastructure should include staff who can engage and educate employers to utilize and employ apprentices and interns.

While the research team did not ask about these critical elements of strong work-based learning programs and the research team does believe that formal study of these aspects is critical, based on our experiences working alongside state agencies and hundreds of organizations across Illinois, we also know that very few dedicated positions actually exist to support apprenticeship and internship efforts within school districts, community colleges, and business and community partners. Additionally, it seems that many of the positions that do exist are in organizations that are already well-resourced and that have visionary and committed leadership to support such work-based learning efforts, though this should also be studied rigorously to understand (a) if this is accurate; (b) how these organizations evolved as they have; and (c) what is necessary to support an expansion of such roles in other organizations. Finally, many of the individuals with whom we interact in the field, across governmental agencies, educational organizations, and business and community partners who are doing this work have come to it through a wide range of career paths. There are few formal programs of study to specifically grow workforce development professionals who can move into such roles supporting work-based learning across these various settings currently. Again, understanding the landscape of pre-service preparation and ongoing training for the work-based learning professionals that are already serving in the field is another critical piece to building a comprehensive environment that can support the apprenticeships and internships that already exist as well as the potential expansion of apprenticeships and internships.

Conclusion

With the support of SkillsUSA Illinois, this study provides a strong baseline on where the State of Illinois is at with regards to not only Youth Apprenticeships, but to work-based learning more broadly and with a specific focus also on internships. In many cases, these may become Registered Apprenticeships as a result of increased experience and exposure on the part of employers. This study has demonstrated strong alignment between major areas of workforce need, such as the Career Pathways of Health Sciences and Technology, Human and Public Services, and Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades, where there are large numbers of interns and, in some cases, apprentices. Ensuring that future efforts to increase work-based learning in ways that are aligned with projected areas of workforce growth and need is important in best serving students, employers, and communities. There are indications here that the efforts of multiple state agencies and local organizations, both public and private, are already working in that direction.

This study would be strengthened even further with more and more robust data, and the recommendations call for improvements and increases in data collection along with the appropriate infrastructure supports to ensure that continued data collection efforts are accurate and sustainable. Another key recommendation focused on continued and expanded professional development for businesses and community partners regarding apprenticeships and internships – everything from their potential benefits to assistance with setting up such programs and to support with the legal and data collection components of high-quality apprenticeships and internships. Finally, the research team recommended additional study, likely with a mixed methodological approach, to understand infrastructure and staffing in both educational organizations and in businesses and community partners around apprenticeships and internships.

This study serves as a foundation upon which consistent and future studies can be compared. The continued production of regular reports as a follow-up to this, whether through the support of organizations like SkillsUSA Illinois or through governmental agencies, will provide great insight for both practitioners as well as policymakers moving forward.

SkillsUSA Illinois Apprenticeship Landscape Analysis Survey — Education

At the request of SkillsUSA Illinois, we are conducting a landscape analysis of the state of apprenticeships and work-based learning (WBL) programs throughout Illinois. This study will be based on existing governmental data, existing non-governmental data, and any additional data that can be gathered by the Northern Illinois University (NIU) research team. The goal of the study is to provide an overview of existing apprenticeship and WBL programs across Illinois. The research team is a collaboration between the Illinois P-20 Network and the NIU Workforce Policy Lab. Your feedback will help us gain a better understanding of how your local work-based learning programs are structured. By sharing your insights, you are contributing to the development of more effective apprenticeships and WBL programs that prepare individuals for successful transitions into apprenticeships and employment. If you need any assistance with completing this survey, please contact Jason Klein at jason.klein@niu.edu.

Thinking about the Work-Based Learning Continuum, to what degree does your school district/postsecondary institution offer students **Career Awareness** or **Career Exploration** experiences (e.g., guest speakers in class, job shadowing, career awareness fairs, etc.)?

- ◯ All or nearly all (90-100%) students experience Career Awareness or Career Exploration experiences
- ◯ Most (67-90%) students experience Career Awareness or Career Exploration experiences
- ◯ Many (50-67%) students experience Career Awareness or Career Exploration experiences
- ◯ Some (30-50%) students experience Career Awareness or Career Exploration experiences
- ◯ Few (less than 30%) students experience Career Awareness or Career Exploration experiences

Thinking about the Work-Based Learning Continuum, to what degree does your school district/postsecondary institution offer students deeper though relatively-short term career development experiences (e.g., **Team-Based Challenges, Expert Project Mentors,** etc.)?

- ◯ All or nearly all (90-100%) students experience Team-Based Challenge or similar experiences with outside, expert adult mentors
- ◯ Most (67-90%) students experience Team-Based Challenge or similar experiences with outside, expert adult mentors
- ◯ Many (50-67%) students experience Team-Based Challenge or similar experiences with outside, expert adult mentors
- ◯ Some (30-50%) students experience Team-Based Challenge or similar experiences with outside, expert adult mentors
- ◯ Few (less than 30%) students experience Team-Based Challenge or similar experiences with outside, expert adult mentors

Thinking about the Work-Based Learning Continuum, to what degree does your school district/postsecondary institution offer students **internship experiences** of at least 60 hours? Please note that the descriptors and percentages are different below than in the previous questions.

- ◯ Most (50% or more) students experience Internships
- ◯ Many (33-50%) students experience Internships
- ◯ Some (20-33%) students experience Internships
- ◯ A group of (10-20%) students experience Internships
- ◯ Few (less than 10%) students experience Internships
- ◯ No (0%) students experience Internships

Approximately how many students in your school district/postsecondary institution experienced **paid internships** of at least 60 hours during the previous fiscal/academic year (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024)?

_____

Approximately how many students in your school district/postsecondary institution experienced **unpaid internships** of at least 60 hours during the previous fiscal/academic year (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024)?

_____

Please enter the approximate number of students who participated in an **internship** (paid or unpaid) during the 2023-2024 year in each Career Pathway. Enter 0 if there were no students.

- ◯ Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources _____
- ◯ Arts and Communications _____
- ◯ Finance and Business Services _____
- ◯ Health Sciences and Technology _____
- ◯ Human and Public Services _____
- ◯ Information Technology _____
- ◯ Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades _____

As best as possible, please list the total number of participants in each category in **internships** (paid or unpaid) during the 2023-2024 year (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024).

- ○ Number of Women/Female students _____
- ○ Number of Black/African-American students _____
- ○ Number of Hispanic/Latinx students _____
- ○ Number of Asian/Pacific Islander students _____
- ○ Number of Native American students _____
- ○ Number of Mutli/Mixed-Ethnicity students _____
- ○ Number of White students _____
- ○ Number of students from Military families/Active Military students/Veteran students _____
- ○ Number of students who are Homeless/Unhoused _____
- ○ Number of students with Disabilities _____
- ○ Number of students in or who have exited the criminal justice/juvenile justice system _____

Approximately how many students in your school district/postsecondary institution experienced an **Apprenticeship** during the previous fiscal/academic year (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024)?

_____

Please enter the approximate number of students who participated in an **Apprenticeship** during the 2023-2024 year in each Career Pathway. Enter 0 if there were no students. Enter 0 if there were no students

- ○ Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources _____
- ○ Arts and Communications _____
- ○ Finance and Business Services _____
- ○ Health Sciences and Technology _____
- ○ Human and Public Services _____
- ○ Information Technology _____
- ○ Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades _____

As best as possible, please list the total number of participants in each category in **Apprenticeships** during the 2023-2024 year (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024).

- ◯ Number of Women/Female students _____
- ◯ Number of Black/African-American students _____
- ◯ Number of Hispanic/Latinx students _____
- ◯ Number of Asian/Pacific Islander students _____
- ◯ Number of Native American students _____
- ◯ Number of Mutli/Mixed-Ethnicity students _____
- ◯ Number of White students _____
- ◯ Number of students from Military families/Active Military students/Veteran students _____
- ◯ Number of students who are Homeless/Unhoused _____
- ◯ Number of students with Disabilities _____
- ◯ Number of students in or who have exited the criminal justice/juvenile justice system _____

Estimate the percentage of your **Apprenticeships** during the last year (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024) that were **Registered Apprenticeships**?

- ◯ 80 - 100% of Apprenticeships were Registered Apprenticeships
- ◯ 50 - 80% of Apprenticeships were Registered Apprenticeships
- ◯ 20 - 50% of Apprenticeships were Registered Apprenticeships
- ◯ Less than 20% of Apprenticeships were Registered Apprenticeships

Internships typically/most frequently are started by...

- ◯ School district or postsecondary institution requesting the internship directly from a business or community partner
- ◯ School district or postsecondary institution requesting the internship by working through a governmental or community group (WIOA, Chamber of Commerce, Local Economic or Workforce Development Board, etc.)
- ◯ The business or community partner directly reaching out to the school district or postsecondary institution to solicit interns
- ◯ The business or community partner requesting potential interns through a governmental or community group (WIOA, Chamber of Commerce, Local Economic or Workforce Development Board, etc.)
- ◯ Other _____

Training is provided to business and community partners for **internships** by...
Check all that apply

- ☐ School district or postsecondary institution partner
- ☐ Regional Education for Employment (EFE) System
- ☐ United States Department of Labor and/or Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Development
- ☐ Illinois Chamber of Commerce
- ☐ Other Statewide Organization _____
- ☐ Local Workforce Development Board
- ☐ Local Chamber of Commerce
- ☐ Other Local Organization _____

Approximately how many community or business partners did your school district/postsecondary institution work with on implementing **internships** during the 2023-2024 year (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024)?

_____

Apprenticeships typically/most frequently are started by...

- ○ School district or postsecondary institution requesting the apprenticeship directly from a business or community partner
- ○ School district or postsecondary institution requesting the apprenticeship by working through a governmental or community group (WIOA, Chamber of Commerce, Local Economic or Workforce Development Board, etc.)
- ○ The business or community partner directly reaching out to the school district or postsecondary institution to solicit apprentices
- ○ The business or community partner requesting potential apprentices through a governmental or community group (WIOA, Chamber of Commerce, Local Economic or Workforce Development Board, etc.)
- ○ Other _____

Training is provided to business and community partners for **apprenticeships** by... *Check all that apply*

- ☐ School district or postsecondary institution partner
- ☐ Regional Education for Employment (EFE) System
- ☐ United States Department of Labor and/or Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Development
- ☐ Illinois Chamber of Commerce
- ☐ Other Statewide Organization _____
- ☐ Local Workforce Development Board
- ☐ Local Chamber of Commerce
- ☐ Other Local Organization _____

Approximately how many community or business partners did your school district/postsecondary institution work with on implementing **apprenticeships** during the 2023-2024 year (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024)?

_____

Please select the three (3) most important goals of your **internship** program

- ☐ High school students earn an ISBE College and Career Pathway Endorsement
- ☐ Workforce development leading directly to jobs within the business and community partner organizations
- ☐ Development of students' Essential Employability Skills/Soft Skills
- ☐ Development of students' Literacy Skills
- ☐ Development of students' Math Skills
- ☐ Development of students' Financial Literacy
- ☐ Development of students' Technical Knowledge and Skills
- ☐ Mentoring for students
- ☐ Industry or nationally recognized credentials
- ☐ Determination of students' long-term interest in the career/career field/Career Pathway
- ☐ Filling of vacancies for the business/community partner
- ☐ Structured-on-the-job training
- ☐ Other _____

Please select the three (3) most important goals of your **apprenticeship** program

- ☐ High school students earn an ISBE College and Career Pathway Endorsement
- ☐ Workforce development leading directly to jobs within the business and community partner organizations
- ☐ Development of students' Essential Employability Skills/Soft Skills
- ☐ Development of students' Literacy Skills
- ☐ Development of students' Math Skills
- ☐ Development of students' Financial Literacy
- ☐ Development of students' Technical Knowledge and Skills
- ☐ Mentoring for students
- ☐ Industry or nationally recognized credentials
- ☐ Determination of students' long-term interest in the career/career field/Career Pathway
- ☐ Filling of vacancies for the business/community partner
- ☐ Structured-on-the-job training
- ☐ Other _____

Who provides funding for the **internship** programs your school district/community college runs? Check all that apply

- ☐ Perkins and/or CTEI Funding
- ☐ Other State Funding
- ☐ Local Workforce Development Board
- ☐ Local Chamber of Commerce
- ☐ Local School District/Postsecondary Institution Funds
- ☐ Other Local Funding
- ☐ Business or Community Partners
- ☐ Students and Families (Fees, etc.)
- ☐ Labor Unions/Employee Groups
- ☐ No Funding
- ☐ Other _____

Who provides funding for the **apprenticeship** programs your school district/community college runs?
Check all that apply

- ☐ Perkins and/or CTEI Funding
- ☐ Other State Funding
- ☐ Local Workforce Development Board
- ☐ Local Chamber of Commerce
- ☐ Local School District/Postsecondary Institution Funds
- ☐ Other Local Funding
- ☐ Business or Community Partners
- ☐ Students and Families (Fees, etc.)
- ☐ Labor Unions/Employee Groups
- ☐ No Funding
- ☐ Other _____

Please provide any additional information you would like to share about work-based learning in your community

_____

_____

Please list any business or community partners that we should contact about their involvement with work-based learning with your school district/postsecondary institution.

- ○ Partner 1 - Organization Name _____
- ○ Partner 1 - Contact Name _____
- ○ Partner 1 - Contact Email Address _____
- ○ Partner 2 - Organization Name _____
- ○ Partner 2 - Contact Name _____
- ○ Partner 2 - Contact Email Address _____
- ○ Partner 3 - Organization Name _____
- ○ Partner 3 - Contact Name _____
- ○ Partner 3 - Contact Email Address _____

My educational organization is a...

- ○ School District
- ○ Area Career Center
- ○ Community College
- ○ Education for Employment (EFE) System
- ○ University
- ○ Trade School
- ○ Other _____

Organization Name

_____

Organization ZIP Code

_____

If you would like a copy of the Final Report, please enter your **last name**

_____

If you would like a copy of the Final Report, please enter your **first name**

_____

If you would like a copy of the Final Report, please enter your **email address**

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SkillsUSA Illinois Apprenticeship Landscape Analysis Survey - Business and Community Partners

At the request of SkillsUSA Illinois, we are conducting a landscape analysis of the state of apprenticeships and work-based learning (WBL) programs throughout Illinois. This study will be based on existing governmental data, existing non-governmental data, and any additional data that can be gathered by the Northern Illinois University (NIU) research team. The goal of the study is to provide an overview of existing apprenticeship and WBL programs across Illinois. The research team is a collaboration between the Illinois P-20 Network and the NIU Workforce Policy Lab. Your feedback will help us gain a better understanding of how your local work-based learning programs are structured. By sharing your insights, you are contributing to the development of more effective work-based learning and apprenticeship programs that prepare individuals for successful transitions into apprenticeships and employment. If you need any assistance with completing this survey, please contact Jennifer Foil at jfoil@niu.edu.

Organizational Information

- ○ Organization Name _____
- ○ Zip Code _____

Type of Organization

- ☐ Philanthropy
- ☐ Chamber of Commerce
- ☐ Industry Association
- ☐ Union
- ☐ Employer
- ☐ Non-profit
- ☐ State Agency
- ☐ Training Provider
- ☐ Local Workforce Area
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Type of Program: There is a work-based learning continuum that goes from career awareness activities to US DOL Registered Apprenticeships. Please select the type of program that your organization operates.
If you have more than one program, focus on just one program at a time.

- ○ Registered Apprenticeship
- ○ Non-Registered Apprenticeship
- ○ Youth Apprenticeship
- ○ Pre-Apprenticeship
- ○ Work-Based Learning such as Career Awareness, Exploration, Team Based Challenge, or Career Development Experience
- ○ Other (please specify) _____

What occupation is the focus of this program?

_____

What elements are included in this Program? *(check all that apply)*

- ☐ Participants are hired by a participating employer
- ☐ Wage increases as skills increase
- ☐ Occupation related training (online, classroom, conference room, etc.)
- ☐ On-the-job mentoring
- ☐ Structured on-the-job training/learning
- ☐ Industry or nationally recognized credentials
- ☐ Secondary classes
- ☐ Reading skills
- ☐ Math skills
- ☐ Employability skills
- ☐ Financial literacy skills
- ☐ Language skills
- ☐ Life skills
- ☐ Mentoring
- ☐ High school equivalency attainment
- ☐ Articulation to a full apprenticeship
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Please indicate the length of this program

- ○ 1 month or less
- ○ 2-3 months
- ○ 4-6 months
- ○ 7-12 months
- ○ 1-2 years
- ○ More than 2 years

Please list the number of employers involved with this program (if you are the only employer, enter 1)

_____

What is the number of staff involved in mentoring, training, and/or administering this program at your organization?

_____

Please list training/education provider(s) for this program, which could include your organization as well as other provider(s).

_____

Please list all the resources, other than funding, that you use for this program (for example: American Job Centers, Chamber of Commerce support, training materials from other sources, etc.)

_____

What type of participants does this program focus on, click all that apply.

- ☐ Youth 18 and under
- ☐ Youth 19-24
- ☐ Adults 25 and over
- ☐ Current employees
- ☐ New hires/or new team members
- ☐ Other populations (for example: homeless, justice involved, persons with disabilities, etc.)

_____

Please provide estimated total participants over the past year.

_____

Funding Sources. What funding is used for this program? *(check all that apply)*

- ☐ Local Workforce Area
- ☐ State grant
- ☐ Philanthropy grant
- ☐ Individual participants
- ☐ Employer(s)
- ☐ Union/employee group
- ☐ State Tax Credit
- ☐ Other Federal Grants
- ☐ School district funding
- ☐ Post-Secondary funding
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Do you have a success story from this program you could share? (optional)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you have more than one program and wish to add the others?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Please add any additional information you would like to share about your program(s)

_____

_____

_____

_____

If you have additional programs that you would like to provide information about, please contact Jennifer Foil: jfoil@niu.edu

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_____

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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

P-20 Research and Data Collaborative

Division of Outreach, Engagement and Regional Development