

WORKFORCE ANALYSIS OF TARGETED INDUSTRIES PROJECT SUMMARY – JANUARY 2010

Will County has seen significant population growth in the last 15 years from 357,313 in 1990 to over 720,000 in 2007. In fact, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, between 2000 and 2005, Will County accounted for 42 percent of all the population growth in the State of Illinois (344,078 total population growth in Illinois and 140,547 of it in Will County). The County has also had seen considerable employment growth in this time period, more than 25% between 2002 and 2009. This growth has created an environment where the effective deployment of economic development and workforce development resources is critical to the continued vitality of the region. The recent economic downturn has changed the landscape of the County dramatically. Employment growth was about 6% per year from 2002 to 2008 and has now slowed to zero and even some overall employment declines. The unemployment rate has grown from 5.1% in June of 2006 to 11.5% in June of 2009.

The Workforce Investment Board and the Will County Center for Economic Development jointly participated in the first two phases of a Targeted Industry and Workforce Analysis. These projects examined the county overall, as well as each of its four development corridors. It included an analysis of existing industries, their local trends, and their local employment needs. Since future trends in business and industry will depend to a large extent on issues such as transportation infrastructure, education systems, demographic trends, and real estate options, an evaluation of the County's competitive advantages was included.

The baseline results of the study were used to identify target industries that might be able to take advantage of the county's assets. Those target industries were evaluated to determine the likelihood that they would either consider Will County for new investment, or that the potential for job creation and facilities would be significant enough to warrant a target marketing effort. The target industries will now be evaluated to determine their key employee job skills and education requirements, to aid the Workforce Investment Board of Will County in future program design and development to ensure a labor pool with the requisite skills.

Workforce Investment Board of Will County seeks to prepare for future growth by providing detail on emerging industries that will be advantageous for Will County today and will position the County for economic growth in the future and industries that recognize and address the County's strengths and weaknesses. This workforce analysis will accomplish both of these goals and will also focus on occupations in industries that can increase the average wages of Will County residents, position residents for value-added jobs, and expand on the County's competitive advantage.

This project will expand on and continue the work that was done in the two previous Targeted Industry and Workforce Analysis with the focus of this project being entirely the workforce analysis. The outcome of the activities in this project should be a drill down of the workforce analysis of the industries targeted in the Phase II project to identify future workforce challenges, requirements, and needs for the identified industries.

Specific project components include:

1. Analysis of the current and future workforce (Supply Analysis)
 - Overall analysis of Will County's workforce and employment base. What are the skills of the people who work in current industries and what are the skills of the residents of the county? How do those two groups overlap? Including occupations, wages, education/experience levels of the current employment base and workforce.
 - Demographics of the workforce. Where is the workforce located geographically? What are the demographic characteristics of the workforce? What are the characteristics of the Will County labor force? How do the two differ?
2. Analysis of the occupational and workforce needs of the targeted industries (Demand Analysis):
 - Targeted industry occupational structure, workforce challenges, requirements, and needs.
 - Wage Levels - Ability of targeted industries to raise the income levels of the County now and in the future.
3. Training provider identification and analysis
 - Current and future proposed training and educational capabilities.
 - Identification of the needs of the occupations in the Targeted Industries related to education and training.
 - Capacity of training providers to develop/enhance programs that create required skills for the targeted industries
4. Gap Analysis
 - Where are the gaps in the current skilled workforce availability?
 - Where are the gaps in training for future workforce development?

Steering Committee:

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