



WILL COUNTY STATE OF YOUTH REPORT 2009



Acknowledgements

The Will County State of Youth Report owes its continued success to many stakeholders, including the Youth Council of the Workforce Investment Board of Will County, local educators, youth service providers, and many others who provide support to the report. We would also like to thank those who have participated in the annual Will County Youth Provider Summits and are the backbone of our County's youth provider system.

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The Purpose of this Report

Many studies have been done on youth and youth behaviors. The Workforce Investment Board of Will County recognized that when examining local workforce issues youth specific information must be taken into consideration. Youth need to be ready, willing and able to become part of the workforce, willing to do what is needed and have the necessary skills and abilities to be successful in the workforce.

The Workforce Investment Board previously released a State of the Workforce Report for Will County¹ that explores in greater detail the industry sectors, critical occupations, and skills and knowledge that are driving the local workforce economy. The Board updates that report periodically with the most current workforce information available. Additionally, a website of youth services, YouthFutures, is also available² to further assist local planners and youth providers. This information will help youth systems develop appropriate short and long-term strategies.

Numbers alone don't tell the full story. Language and cultural barriers, poverty status, and academic challenges affect many youth. There may be populations of youth that are small as a percentage of the whole, but are large numerically. More importantly, we don't know whether youth of all socio-economic and ability levels are being prepared with the skills and knowledge they need to transition to responsible adulthood and to be successful in the industries and occupations that comprise Will County's growing economy.

The purpose of this report is to inform and assist employers, youth providers, educators, government, parents, and others to better understand Will County youth and ensure that the youth of Will County have productive futures and long-term self-sufficiency.

¹ The State of the Workforce Report for Will County can be accessed at www.willcountyworkforceboard.com.

² YouthFutures can be accessed at www.youthfuturesmetro.com.

Background

In 2002, the Youth Council of the Workforce Investment Board of Will County committed to a process to understand youth in Will County. For the purpose of this report, “Youth” is flexibly defined as an individual who does not yet possess the skills needed to assume an adult role in the work community.

With this understanding, the Youth Council of the Workforce Investment Board of Will County defined a vision for youth development and success that remains unchanged:

“The Mission of the Youth Council of Will County is to develop partnerships to coordinate and promote programs for youth. These programs will promote the necessary knowledge, skills, attitude, and experiences, to enable a smooth transition into a changing world through life-long learning experiences leading to future successful careers and long-term economic self-sufficiency.”

This mission contains two elements:

- The youth development system is about all youth, not just those with barriers. The system should be thought of very broadly. It includes employer, K-16 education, community-based organizations, youth service organizations, faith-based entities, and public and private training institutions.
- The purpose of youth development is to enable youth to become well-adjusted adults with the skills needed to be productive in skilled careers. Youth development is not just a social issue. It is also a critical economic issue, both for the individual youth as well as for the Will County economy.

The Workforce Investment Board of Will County in partnership with The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago (Metropolitan counties include Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, Livingston, McHenry and Will), contracted with Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago to develop a multi-faceted strategic plan to comprehensively report the status of youth in the Chicago Metro region as well as Will County, taking a look at a wide range of societal aspects that affect our youth. In order to collect the information necessary to compile the initial report, three activities were identified. Those activities were:

Chicago Metropolitan Region Youth Resource Mapping Project

- Hosted a Forum in 2002 where educators, youth providers and business leaders focused on strategies for preparing youth for current and future workforce needs, career awareness, integrating career development into subject areas and development of soft skills and integration of work ethics, leadership, and diversity into teaching.
- Regional survey of youth service providers to learn about youth services, identify potential partners, refer youth to agencies for additional services and gain a deeper understanding of available youth services to support future planning.

Customization of Data Collection to Address Needs Specific to Will County Youth

- Local Steering Committee was convened to develop the database of Will County agencies, providers and youth focused organizations and to review the survey instrument and information collection to ensure an appropriate and functional snapshot of youth data specific to Will County needs.

- Completed project included a web-based directory of youth services and organizations with links to area providers and resource agencies and a written report that includes a summary of the survey results. The information in the YouthFutures website is updated annually through a survey process.

Focus Groups of Community Leaders and Youth

- Focus groups were conducted to gain feedback from adults and youth about the most important issues facing youth in Will County, to compare the issues selected by the adult focus groups with the issues selected by the youth focus groups, and compare the results of the focus groups to the gap analysis from the survey results collected by Chapin Hall.
- Will County hosted the first Youth Provider Summit in May 2003 to introduce the Youth Resource Mapping project and gather information on what area experts perceived the greatest needs of Will County youth were.
- Youth Focus Groups were convened to get youth input from six separate geographic locations within Will County from male and female participants ranging 14-19 years old of all ethnicities.
- The results were tallied and the fifteen priority issues from the focus groups identified. The priority issues identified on Page 6 are listed in alphabetical order and not in order of popularity or importance. Based on these results the adults/professionals and the youth are in agreement with many of the major issues. All issues listed by either group describe a perceived critical youth issue in Will County. This information should give the citizens of Will County a good overview of youth needs. The complete list of youth issues is included in Appendix A.

Will County State of Youth Report

As a final component, the State of Youth report was developed to analyze secondary data that would assist this report in describing the state of youth in Will County. Information relating to youth includes: economics, education, age, race, household status, employment, substance abuse, mental and physical health, criminal activity, disabilities, and language differences.

This is the third update of the Will County State of Youth Report. This update of the report seeks not only to update the information in the original report but to add additional information now available related to the priority issues identified.

Adult Priority Issues	Youth Priority Issues
Child Abuse & Neglect - many youth are in violent homes and are suffering the effects of living in fear and /or mimicking the behavior in the school and community	
Cultural Diversity and Bias Reduction – the diversity of Will County is growing disproportionately to the programs available to those populations as well as the need for training to increase understanding and tolerance of other races and cultures	
	Decision Making (ability to make good decisions) - includes the importance of good values/morals and the need for adult intervention when a youth is out of control
Drugs - concerns regarding youth use and availability	Drugs/Alcohol - use and abuse
Education - school attendance/performance	Education - quality of and success with
Family Support - youth/parental relationship	Relationships - primarily with family/parents
Gangs - concerns regarding youth involvement	
Homelessness/Safe Housing – many youth in Will County are homeless, have no access to a home for youth in crisis, or are residing in unsafe neighborhoods	Homelessness/Safe Housing - some youth don't have housing or live in unsafe housing
Jobs - employment status and availability of jobs	Jobs/Money - ability to get a job and access to money
Mental Health Services (affordable and accessible) – youth in Will County suffer from depression and suicide ideation, low self-esteem, out of control anger, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and other mental health disorders that impair their ability to be happy, successful and productive members of society	Mental Health Issues -specifically suicide, depression, eating disorders, and self-mutilation
Physical Health Services (Affordable and Accessible) – many youth are in need of basic health care as well as specialized services such as teen pregnancy prevention and care and sexually transmitted disease prevention and care	Physical Health Services - including sex, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases
Recreation Opportunities – youth in Will County have limited opportunities to access positive social outlets	Activities - non-school related free-time activities
	Self-Esteem/Peer Pressure/Excessive Competition - concerns regarding ability to resist negative peer pressure
Spiritual Growth and Development – many youth in Will County are not involved in church activities or other family/community spiritual development opportunities	Spiritual Growth/Religion - importance of this in their lives
	Stealing - concerns regarding youth stealing from each other
Support Networks/Mentoring – many youth experience a lack in positive role models and support groups in order to promote positive life/social skills and healthy relationships	
Transportation – a lack of adequate public transportation serving youth in the communities of Will County	Transportation - ability to get around
Violence – many youth are victims of peer or dating violence and don't have the skills or confidence to change/leave the relationship, or the knowledge to protect themselves from becoming involved in such relationships again	Violence and Personal/Community Safety - community violence and peer/bullying violence

Youth Demographics: Who are they?

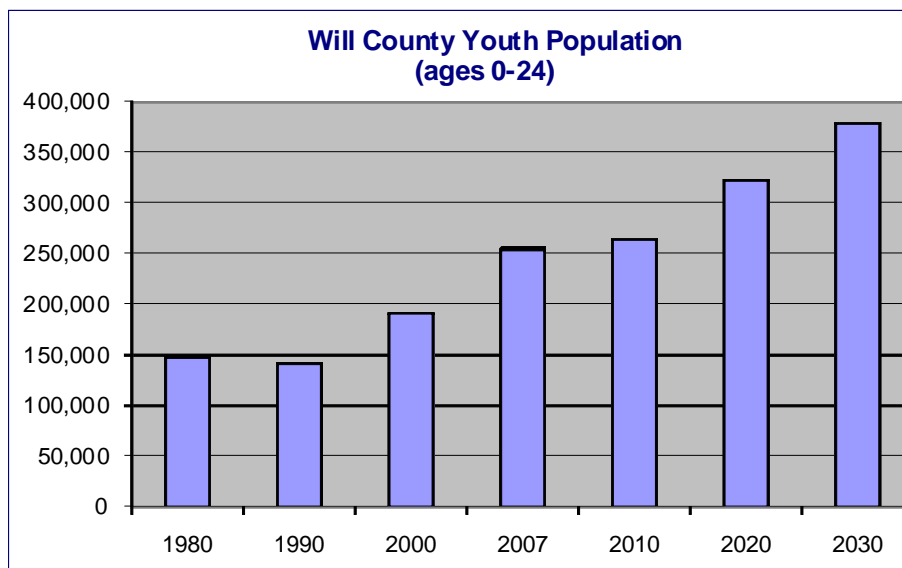
Will County is increasingly diverse, with many youth having difficulty communicating in English, are disabled, live in poverty, or are substance users. While the percentages for Will County are lower than some comparison areas, the absolute numbers are increasing. This implies challenges for schools and youth service providers. Additional resources will be needed to ensure disadvantaged, disabled, and diverse children are assisted in reaching their potential.

How many youth do we have?

In 2000 there were 191,556 youth ages 0-24 years of age in Will County. By 2007 that number had increased to 254,832, which represents a 33% increase. It is projected that by 2030, Will County could have nearly 380,000 youth ages 0-24 residing within Will County. Increasing numbers are already taxing our schools and youth providers, particularly given the challenges some youth have. Much of the increase has been and will continue to be in the school age category (ages 5-17).

Total Youth Population: Past, Present and Future Will County							
	1980	1990	2000	2007	2010	2020	2030
Under 5 Years	29,002	29,316	42,028	53,545	51,813	68,455	79,054
5-9 Years	29,882	30,849	44,189	56,743	56,697	67,660	82,871
10-14 Years	29,754	29,395	41,355	51,448	57,670	66,496	81,236
15-19 Years	30,476	27,889	36,271	49,284	53,524	64,567	73,365
20-24 Years	28,218	24,041	27,713	43,812	44,095	55,356	61,460
TOTAL	147,332	141,490	191,556	254,832	263,800	322,534	377,986

Source: U.S Census, American Community Survey 2000, 2007
Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Population Projections



Source: U.S Census, American Community Survey 2000, 2007
Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Population Projections

Youth Population by Gender (0-24 Years Old) 2007					
	Joliet	Will	DuPage	Cook	Illinois
Female	27,906	123,241	154,086	895,823	2,197,256
Male	27,656	130,719	164,525	930,908	2,305,029
Total	55,574	253,960	318,611	1,826,731	4,502,285

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2007

The distribution between males and females for Will, DuPage, and Cook Counties, and the State of Illinois, shows a slightly higher proportion of males under the age of 25 than females. The City of Joliet female population in this age category is slightly higher than the male population.

The Population is Increasingly Diverse

Will County's population is predominantly white but the minority population is growing. However, compared to Cook County and Illinois as a whole, Will County has a smaller percentage of minorities in its population. The Hispanic population, especially in the City of Joliet, has and continues to be the major area of increased diversity in Will County. The Hispanic population has increased from 8.7% of the Will County population in 2000 to 14% in 2007.

Population by Race/Origin (Youth and Adults) Will County – 2007					
	Joliet	Will	DuPage	Cook	Illinois
White	69%	78%	82%	52%	72%
Black	17%	11%	5%	26%	15%
Asian	1%	4%	10%	6%	5%
Other	14%	7%	4%	17%	9%
Hispanic or Latino ³	29%	14%	12%	23%	15%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2007

Diversity is healthy for the vitality of any area, but it does bring different cultures and values that need to be understood and accommodated in our schools and workplaces. It also brings communication challenges that can impact the educational system and employment settings. These communication challenges may be increasing given the increase in the percentage of the population that speaks a language other than English (increase from 12% in 2000 to 19% in 2007).

Language Barriers 2000 and 2007						
		Joliet	Will	DuPage	Cook	Illinois
Speaks only English (5 years and older)	2000	81%	88%	79%	69%	80%
	2007	72%	81%	74%	66%	78%
Speaks language other than English (5 years old and older)	2000	19%	12%	20%	31%	19%
	2007	28%	19%	26%	34%	22%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2000, 2007

³ "Hispanic or Latino" is not a racial designation but an ethnic origin but is included on the chart to compare relative to the racial designations.

Youth With Disabilities Represent Another “Minority”

In 2007, there were 7,309 young people in Will County ages 5-15 that are challenged with some sort of disability. Disability is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as a “long-lasting physical, mental, or emotional condition. Disabilities included in the U.S. Census data are sensory (hearing/seeing), mental, physical, and self-care (inability to care for self).” The distribution of types of disabling conditions of youth in Will County is similar to the state and national averages.

Percent Disabled Population Age 5-15 by Type of Disability ⁴ 2007										
	Joliet		Will		DuPage		Cook		Illinois	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Sensory	0.6%	143	0.8%	943	0.8%	1,143	0.9%	7,071	0.9%	17,380
Physical	0.6%	143	0.9%	1,061	0.9%	1,286	1.0%	7,857	1.0%	19,311
Mental	5.0%	1,195	3.7%	4,362	4.2%	6,003	3.5%	27,501	4.4%	84,968
Self-Care	0.4%	96	0.8%	943	0.7%	1,000	0.7%	5,500	0.7%	13,517
All Disabilities	6.6%	1,577	6.2%	7,309	6.6%	9,432	6.1%	47,929	7.0%	135,104
Total Pop Ages 5-15	100%	23,908	100%	117,898	100%	142,917	100%	785,749	100%	1,931,102

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2007

In addition, mental disabilities comprise more than half of the total of all disabilities. Because mental conditions are not visibly obvious, these youth may have a harder time getting their needs recognized and met. The Will County Health Department reports that 10,256 children and adolescent services were provided in its Behavioral Health Programs. In addition, the Health Department reported a total of 1,037 screenings through the Screening, Assessment and Support Services (SASS) Program from July of 2008 through March of 2009. SASS provides mental health screening, assessment, planning, crisis intervention and treatment services for youth who are at risk of psychiatric hospitalization and who are without resources other than the State’s Office of Mental Health.

Obviously, young people are not all alike. They may have language, cultural, physical, or mental barriers to success. Different strategies are needed to help different individuals become successful. Schools, providers, and employers may need additional assistance in working with increasingly diverse populations.

⁴ Youth may have more than one type of disability.

Youth Economic Risk Factors: How are they doing?

The long-term success of youth in Will County may be influenced by their economic situation. The ten key indicators of child well-being as defined by the Annie E. Casey Foundation⁵ are: birth weight, infant mortality rate, child death rate, teen death rate, teen birth rate, dropout status, disconnected youth, parental employment status, poverty status, and family status. Displayed in other sections of this report are indicators related to education and employment. This section will focus on those economic risk factors that can impact the future well being of our youth.

Income and Poverty Impact Youth

One key indicator of youth well-being relates to economic self-sufficiency.

“Children who grow up poor are more likely to experience a range of troubling outcomes, including developmental delays and learning disabilities. They are more likely to drop out of school, have babies in their teens and be unemployed. Finding affordable housing is a challenge facing many working families; in fact, 50 percent of renters statewide cannot afford the cost of a two-bedroom unit. Families who must move frequently to find affordable housing disrupt children’s schooling as a consequence.” – Voice for Illinois Children

In 2000, median family income in Illinois ranged from a high in DuPage County of \$79,314 to a low in Alexander County of \$25,789. The median family income in 2000 in Will County was \$69,608 per year. By 2007, the median family income in Will County had increased to \$80,997. More than 40% of Will County’s families have income between \$50,000 and \$100,000 compared to only about 36% of the families statewide in this category.

Median Family Income by Geography 2000 and 2007					
	Joliet	Will	DuPage	Cook	Illinois
Median Family Income 2007	\$61,948	\$80,997	\$89,098	\$63,204	\$65,761
Median Family Income 2000	\$55,870	\$69,608	\$79,314	\$53,784	\$55,545

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2000, 2007

⁵ Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the U.S. A complete data book can be found at: <http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/>.

Percent of Families by Income Category, 2007					
	Joliet	Will	DuPage	Cook	Illinois
Less than \$15,000	8.0%	3.8%	2.7%	8.3%	7.1%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	4.7%	3.3%	3.7%	8.9%	7.6%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	8.3%	5.6%	4.8%	8.9%	8.7%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	15.1%	11.1%	11.0%	12.9%	13.1%
\$50,000-\$74,999	24.4%	21.3%	18.5%	18.6%	20.7%
\$75,000-\$99,999	17.6%	19.3%	15.2%	14.5%	15.5%
\$100,000-\$149,999	18.3%	22.3%	21.7%	15.3%	16.0%
\$150,000 or more	3.7%	13.2%	22.4%	12.1%	11.3%
Median Family Income	\$61,948	\$80,997	\$89,098	\$63,204	\$65,761
Total Families	33,212	168,640	239,422	1,232,251	3,180,087

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2007

In 2000 in Will County, single-mother families for whom median income is historically lower than other family groups, ranked better when compared to other counties: 3rd in the State, and 59th in the U.S. for all counties. This is not to say, however, that there are not Will County families and children struggling with poverty. The County's median income for single-mother families was just \$30,943 in 2000, which is less than half of the married-couple family median income (\$76,576). It is also \$10,522 short of the "self-sufficiency standard for single-parent families" of \$41,465⁶

Median Family Income for Single-mother Families with Own Children: 2000			
National Rank	In-State Rank	Geographic Area	Median Income
18	1	DuPage, IL	\$35,894
24	2	Kendall, IL	\$34,700
59	3	Will, IL	\$30,943
83	4	Lake, IL	\$29,865
90	5	McHenry, IL	\$29,556
107	7	Grundy, IL	\$28,729
141	8	Kane, IL	\$27,350
396	14	Cook, IL	\$22,923
877	36	Kankakee, IL	\$19,989

Source: U.S. Census from Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2000

⁶ Source: Voices for Illinois Children, <http://www.voices4kids.org>

While all youth benefit from having a non-parental mentor, youth from single-parent homes have an even greater need for an additional adult in their lives. Recruiting and preparing adult mentors is a task that is undertaken by many entities within the youth development system. Participants in the Youth Focus Groups as well as participants at the first Youth Provider Summit recognized the need for responsible adult mentors.

There are 217,422 households in Will County and over 22,000 of them are a female householder with no husband present. There are 168,640 families in Will County and 4.4%, or 7,420, had income below the poverty line. While the majority children in Will County live in two parent households and some of them are below poverty the poverty line, single parent households do comprise most of the families in poverty. Poverty impacts not only the current but also the long-term well-being of the youth in our County. Those in poverty struggle to meet their everyday needs such as food and housing and cannot focus their attention on long-term economic self-sufficiency.

Percent Households with Related Children Under 18, 2007					
	Joliet	Will	DuPage	Cook	Illinois
Married-Couple households with children	50.8%	63.2%	58.2%	42.2%	49.5%
Female Householder, no husband present	13.8%	10.2%	8.9%	15.8%	12.7%
Male Householder, no wife present	5.6%	4.2%	3.7%	5.4%	4.6%
Non-family Households	29.8%	22.4%	29.2%	36.5%	33.2%
Total Households	47,290	217,422	337,964	1,940,735	4,759,579

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2007

Overall, 7.2% of children under the age of 18 in Will County are living in poverty. This is up from the 2006 rate of 5.8%⁷. The poverty rate of all residents rose slightly to 5.9%, a total of 39,037 people. The percentage of Will County residents in extreme poverty, living below 50% of the federal poverty threshold, was 2.8%, or 18,464 people.⁸ The federal poverty threshold for a family of four in 2009 was \$22,050⁹.

Poverty Rates over Time				
	Will	DuPage	Cook	Illinois
2001	4.4%	3.4%	13.7%	10.4%
2002	5.5%	3.5%	13.9%	11.5%
2005	5.9%	5.5%	13.3%	12.7%
2004	7.0%	3.8%	14.6%	12.5%
2005	5.1%	4.9%	15.0%	11.9%
2006	5.8%	4.9%	15.5%	11.0%
2007	5.9%	4.8%	14.6%	11.9%

⁷ Heartland Alliance, 2009 Income and Poverty Data, Will County

⁸ Heartland Alliance, 2009 Income and Poverty Data, Will County

⁹ U.S. Census, Poverty Thresholds, 2007

Source: U.S. Census, Heartland Alliance 2009 Income and Poverty Data

The poverty rate for Will County for youth under the age of 18 is 7.2% which is more than a percentage point above the overall poverty rate. Will County ranked in the middle of the Counties reviewed in median household income and percentage of EITC tax filers. Bankruptcies were up across the board in all counties, with Will County coming in third with the most change. The economic situation in the last two years has no doubt had a negative impact on the number of Bankruptcies.

Income and Poverty Indicators							
County	Number of People in Poverty 2007	Poverty Rate for Youth (under age 18) 2007	Bankruptcies (per 1,000 People) 2007	Change in Bankruptcies (per 1,000 People) 2006-2007	Median Household Income 2007	Percent of Tax Filers Receiving EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit) 2006	Percent of EITC Tax Filers Receiving Refund Anticipation Loan or Check 2006
Cook	759,038	21.6%	3.2	0.9	\$52,554	18.5%	49.6%
DeKalb	10,996	9.7%	2.4	0.5	\$54,945	10.6%	37.6%
DuPage	43,761	5.7%	1.9	0.6	\$73,818	7.4%	27.7%
Grundy	2,532	7.1%	5.2	2.2	\$62,835	9.9%	36.2%
Kane	38,764	11.1%	2.3	0.9	\$68,513	11.1%	44.0%
Kankakee	13,852	16.5%	3.8	0.6	\$47,009	18.3%	54.5%
Kendall	3,543	4.8%	2.9	1.0	\$77,938	7.9%	35.4%
Lake	43,562	8.4%	2.3	0.7	\$77,904	9.5%	40.3%
McHenry	16,566	6.3%	2.5	0.9	\$74,115	7.0%	27.3%
Will	39,037	7.2%	3.4	1.0	\$71,597	10.2%	42.2%

Source: U.S. Census, Heartland Alliance 2009 Income and Poverty Data

By 2002, the number of children and adults getting Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) plummeted by more than 76 percent since TANF rules changed to encourage a “welfare to work” process. However, this data may beg the question, “if the number of people on TANF has decreased so dramatically, are these people now employed in jobs that provide for self-sufficiency?”

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families 1998 – 2002				
	Total TANF Cases		Children on TANF	
	Will	Illinois	Will	Illinois
1998	1,856	117,634	4,849	319,323
1999	925	76,194	3,157	239,320
2000	486	51,480	2,143	182,239
2001	291	34,637	1,537	137,317
2002	121	22,446	932	96,393

Source: U.S. Census from Annie E. Casey Foundation

The latest statewide TANF data indicates a decrease in recipients over the last five years. In 2007 there was about a 16% decrease in the number of families in Illinois receiving TANF and 17% decrease in the number of children.

Illinois Temporary Assistance to Needy Families 2003 – 2007					
Recipients	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Families	37,895	35,659	38,390	36,330	30,405
Children	80,252	73,308	77,308	72,467	60,077

Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation National KIDS COUNT Program
Voices for Illinois Children

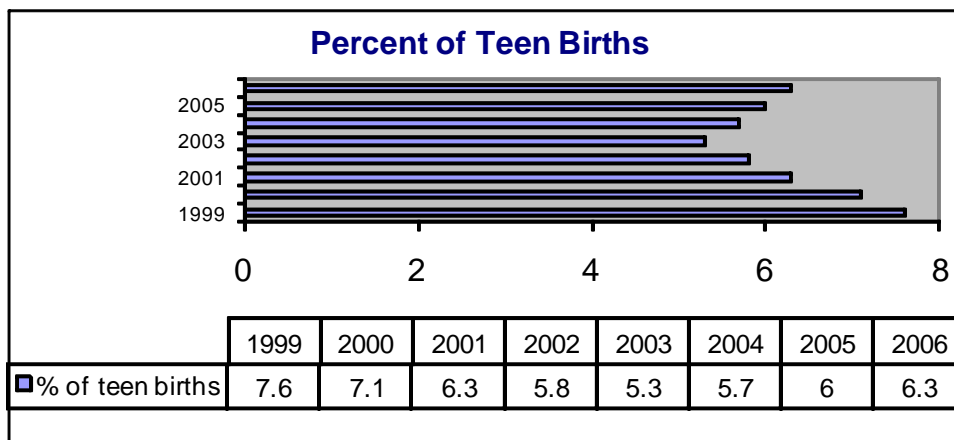
Youth Health Risk Factors: Are they taking care of themselves?

Reports indicate that health factors may also impact future success of youth. The importance of these factors can be significant for portions of the population in Will County. As indicated earlier, the Annie E. Casey Foundation identified indicators of child well-being. The tables below provide some trend information on the following indicators: teen births, birth weight, infant mortality, and teen suicide.

Many Factors Impact the Health and Well-Being of Youth

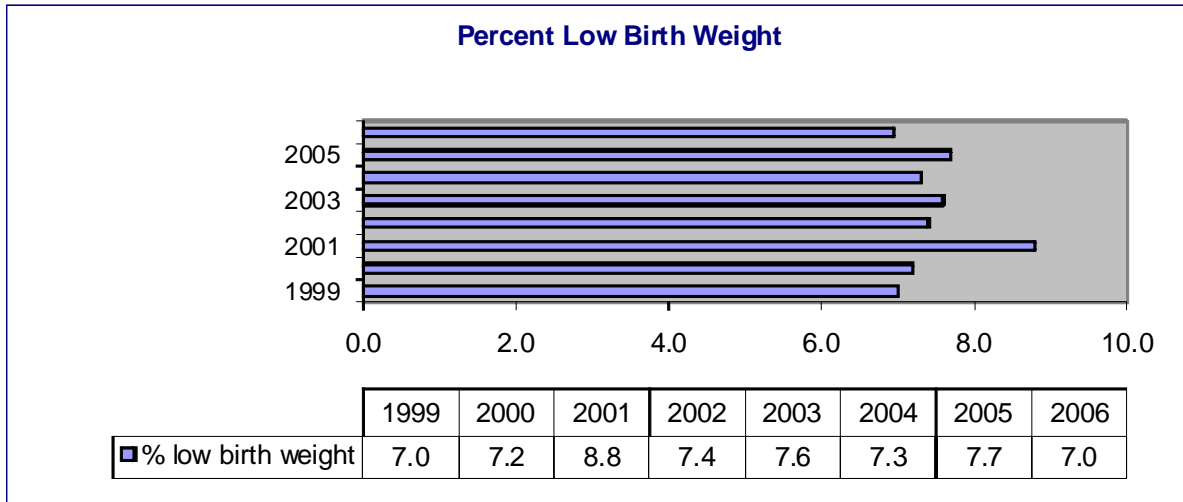
Health and Wellness Indicators (Children 17 and under)				
	Will	DuPage	Cook	Illinois
Child population 2006	183,202	236,491	1,357,756	3,215,244
Foster Care Rate (per 1,000 children) in 2001	1.7	0.7	1.3	7.4
Percent of all Births to Teens 15-19 years old, 2005	6.0%	4.1%	10.7%	9.7%
Infant Mortality – Deaths (per 1,000) 2000-2005	6.2	6.6	8.4	7.5
Child Abuse and Neglect (per 1,000) in 2005	2.9	2.0	4.5	7.2
Self-Sufficiency Standard, Two-Parent, Two Child Family in 2001	\$41,465	\$45,146	\$40,189	N/A

Source: Voices for Illinois Children, 2009



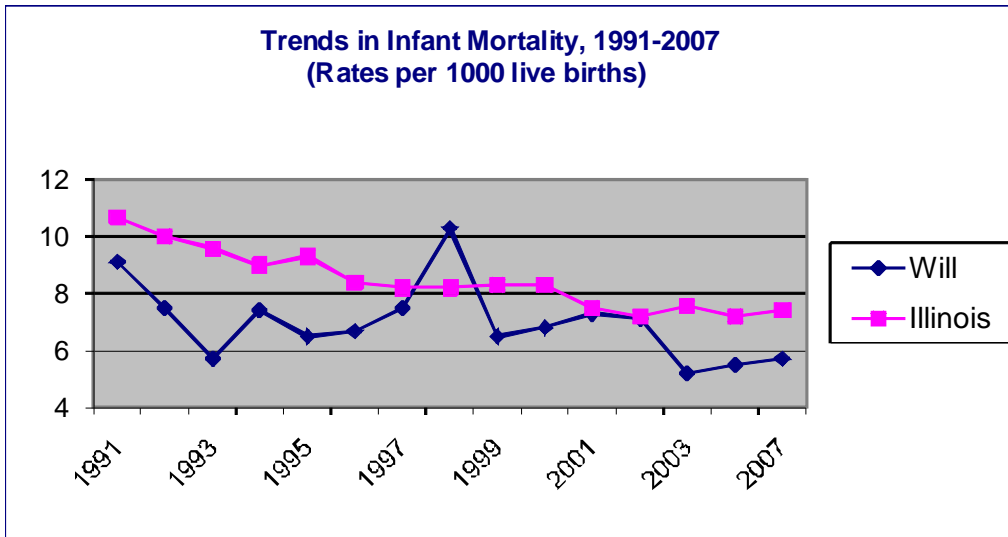
Source: Will County Health Department Annual Report 2008

As the chart above indicates, the percentage of births in Will County attributable to teens declined between 1999 and 2004 reaching its lowest level, 5.3%, in 2003. Teen births did rise slightly to 5.7% in 2004 and has been slightly increasing every year. There has also been a decline in the low birth weight level from 8.8% in 2001 to 7.3% in 2004 and has been continually decreasing to the same 1999 rate, 7.0%. In addition, there was a 24% decrease in Will County teens giving birth from 1986-2000, compared to the State of Illinois decrease of only 4.0%. There were 380 participants in Will County Health Department Teen Parent Services in 2007 and 462 participants in 2008. In addition, there were nearly 2,690 home visits by the Will County Health Department in 2008, which was a decrease by 110 home visits in 2007.



Source: Will County Health Department Annual Report, 2008

Infant mortality in Will County has dropped by over 36% since 1990. For the most part, Will County's infant mortality rate has been lower than the rate for the State of Illinois as a whole, however this difference became more pronounced with a significant drop in infant mortality in Will County in the last year.



Source: Will County Health Department Annual Report, 2008

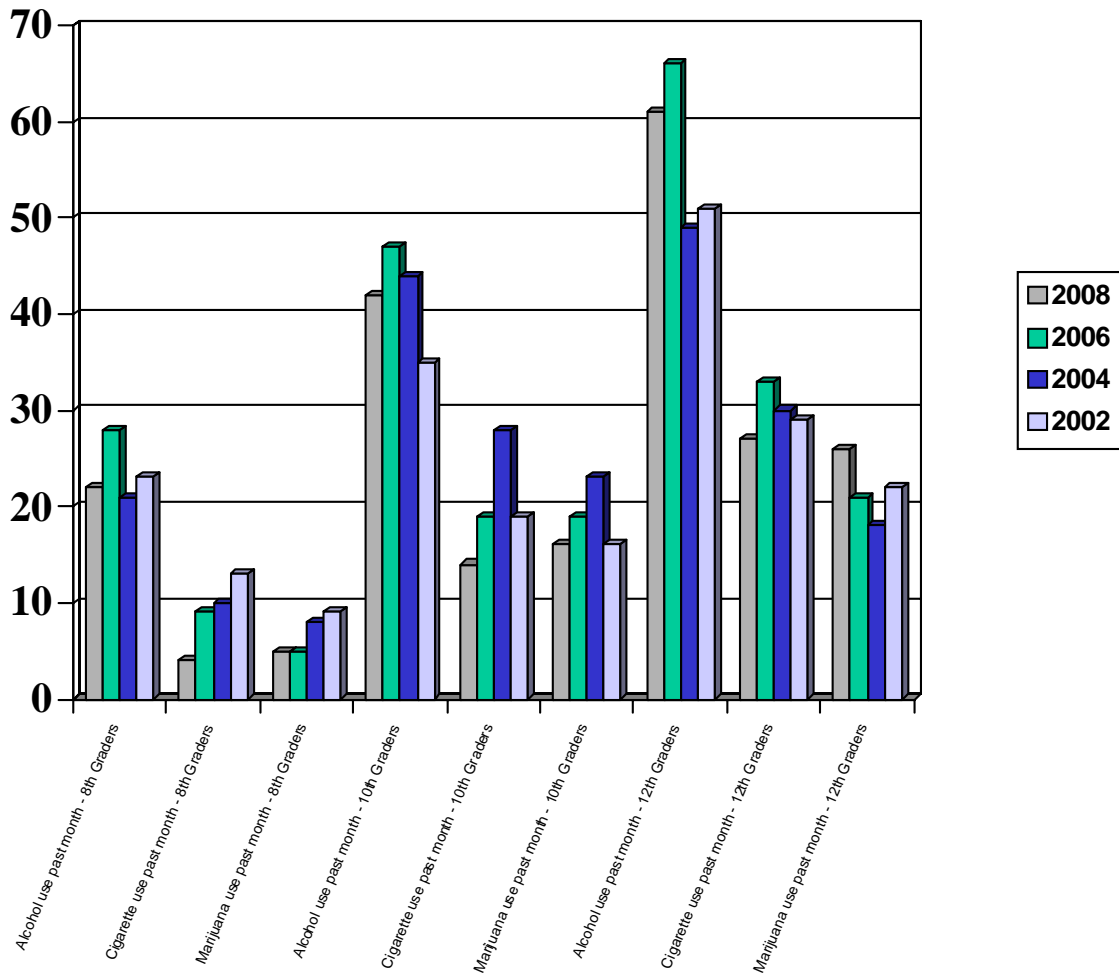
The Will County Coroner's office reported two suicides each in 2007 and 2008, which reflects a decrease from the six suicides reported in 2006. Overall, two suicides annually is the lowest number experienced by Will County since 1999.

Will County Youth Suicides										
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Suicides, 10-19 year olds	4	4	6	2	5	5	2	6	2	2

Source: Will County Coroner's Annual Report, 2008

Drug Use Among Illinois Teens and Pre-Teens

The Illinois Youth Survey is conducted in the spring of every other year with students from 8th, 10th, and 12th grades asked about their drug use and behavior. Responses from a scientific sample of youth are tallied to give statewide figures. The sample used in 2008 included 7,409 students from across the state. It is important to note that all the data is self-reported. With the exception of marijuana use by 12th graders, the percent of Illinois teens and pre-teens who reported that they used gateway substances (tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana) decreased from 2006 according to the Illinois Youth Survey¹⁰ project. A breakout of selected data by county is available through the Illinois Youth Survey, with Will County's data shown in tables below.



¹⁰ "Youth Study on Substance Use, Comparing the 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008 Results," Prepared by Lighthouse Institute of Chestnut Health Systems, Bloomington, Illinois, for the Illinois Department of Human Services. Available online at <http://www.illinoisyouthsurvey.org>.

Substances of Choice

If a student reported he or she used any controlled substance, it was likely to at least include one or more of the three so-called “gateway” drugs: alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana, according to the findings of the Illinois Youth Survey. Survey results indicate that about four-fifths of students reporting some drug use only use the gateway drugs and may never progress to other drugs. On the other hand, youth who avoid the gateway drugs are unlikely to ever try other kinds of drugs. The study concluded that because gateway drugs are the most used, they pose the most health risks.

Alcohol

Statewide, alcohol continued to be the number one controlled substance of choice for youth. Nearly one in five of the surveyed student reported using alcohol, according to the Illinois Youth Survey 2008. The 2008 numbers have decreased slightly from 2006. Will County 8th graders surveyed indicated that 22% of them had used alcohol compared to 28% in 2006, 42% of the 10th graders saying so compared to 47% in 2006, and 61% of the 12th graders, which is down from 66% in 2006.

Tobacco

Tobacco is the next most used substance among the students in Illinois. The Illinois Youth Survey reflected a drop to 4% in 2008 from 9% in 2006.

More than 29% of 12th graders surveyed in the Illinois Youth Survey of 2008 said they smoked, which exceeds the national average of that age group. In addition, 14% of 10th graders indicated they smoked, as did 4% of the 8th graders. This represents a 5% drop since last year.

Marijuana

Marijuana still remains the third most used substance. Five percent (5%) of 8th graders reported using marijuana, while more than 26% of 12th graders reported using marijuana in the past month. Overall, the Illinois marijuana use rate decreased slightly for youth, from 16.6% in 2006 to 15.7% in 2008.

Among Will County youth, use of marijuana increased as the students got older as is true for most drugs, with rates of 5%, 16% and 26% for 8th, 10th and 12th graders respectively. These rates are roughly equivalent to statewide findings. The Youth Survey results also indicated that with the increased use of alcohol, cigarette use and violence also increased among students.

Juvenile Delinquency Risk Factors

In recent years, there has been a growing concern regarding juvenile crime and the desire to develop preventative strategies to reduce juvenile delinquency. The Illinois Crime Justice Information Authority prepared a comprehensive report entitled "A profile of Juvenile Justice System Activities and Juvenile Delinquency Risk Factors in Will County." In 2005, it is reported that there were 1,170 arrests in Will County. Of those 1,170 arrests, the higher incidences noted were 346 property arrests, 281 violent person arrests, 85 drug arrests, 38 weapons arrests in Will County. The following table provides 2005 risk factor rates for Will County, DuPage County, Cook County and Illinois.

RISK FACTOR RATES				
2005				
PER 100,000 PERSONS				
RISK FACTOR	WILL	DUPAGE	COOK	ILLINOIS
Social Risk Factors				
Drug/Alcohol Treatment Rates Mothers	91	36	292	213
Number of Inmates with Children (2004)	501	606	14,580	24,941
Rates of Orders of Protection that Protect Minors	223	110	274	281
Reported Domestic Offense Rates	316	257	1,376	904
Reported Child Abuse and Neglect Rates	328	266	569	852
Reported Child Sexual Abuse Rates	40	37	54	81
Reported Crimes Against Youth	56	53	553	309
School Risk Factors				
Truancy Rates (K-12)	2,121	247	566	1,118
Suspensions Rates (K-12)	6,762	3,438	10,042	8,224
Expulsions Rates (K-12)	133	27	145	162
High School Dropout Rates (9-12)	1,488	1,493	7,215	4,435
Environmental Risk Factors				
Unemployment Rates	5,755	4,667	6,363	5,719
Youth TANF Rates (Average Monthly)	1,247	973	53,829	77,575

Source: Juvenile Justice System and Risk Factor Data Center, 2005

<http://www.icjia.state.il.us/public/index.cfm?metasection=forms&metapage=jjriskfactormain>

According to 2008 statistics provided by the River Valley Juvenile Detention Center¹¹, a total of 662 Will County youth were placed in detention at River Valley Juvenile Detention Center. Of those youth, 534 (81%) were males and 128 (19%) were female. The average age of all intakes is 16 years old. Concern for these youth has resulted in the implementation of model programs to offer a continuum of care is being implemented. Will County's Drug Court program, School-Based Probation Officers, Evening Reporting Center Program, and alternative schools are all examples of programs aimed at giving at-risk kids a chance to change behaviors.

¹¹River Valley Juvenile Detention Center Statistics, <http://www.rivervalleydetention.com/statistics.htm>

Work Experiences of Youth: Are they ready to work?

Ensuring that youth are working or prepared to work is critical to their long-term self-sufficiency. Overall employment of youth between the ages of 16 and 19 in Will County is fairly high and somewhat higher than comparison areas. This is also true when looking at those youth who are still in school. However, the trend changes when looking at youth who are not enrolled in school. Sixty (60) percent of Will County youth between the ages of 16 and 24 are employed, a slightly higher percentage than DuPage County (56%) and a significantly higher percentage than Cook County (47%).

Employment of Youth Ages 16-24					
	Joliet	Will	DuPage	Cook	Illinois
Employed	11,739	50,134	64,170	313,934	864,127
Unemployed	1,707	7,300	9,480	73,281	175,518
In the Military	0	0	68	129	7,894
Not in Labor Force	4,613	25,920	41,083	278,087	626,085
Total Population 16-24	18,059	83,354	114,801	665,431	1,673,324

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2007

Employment of Youth Ages 16-19 Not Enrolled in School¹²					
	Joliet	Will	DuPage	Cook	Illinois
Employed ¹³	48%	56%	66%	47%	52%
Unemployed	8%	13%	10%	17%	15%
Not in Labor Force	44%	29%	24%	35%	29%
Total Population 16-19	2,085	5,383	6,717	64,442	144,515

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Employment of Youth Ages 16-19 Enrolled in School¹⁴					
	Joliet	Will	DuPage	Cook	Illinois
Employed ¹⁵	47%	48%	45%	33%	41%
Unemployed	8%	7%	5%	9%	8%
Not in Labor Force	45%	45%	50%	58%	51%
Total Population 16-19	3,896	22,776	40,488	223,534	560,117

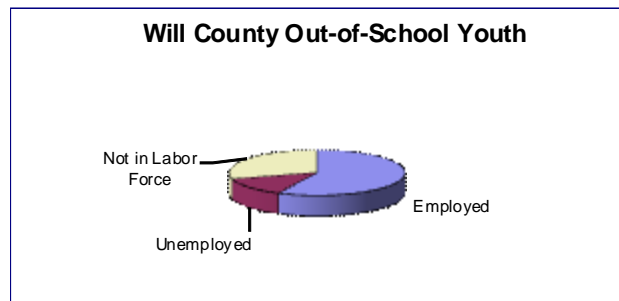
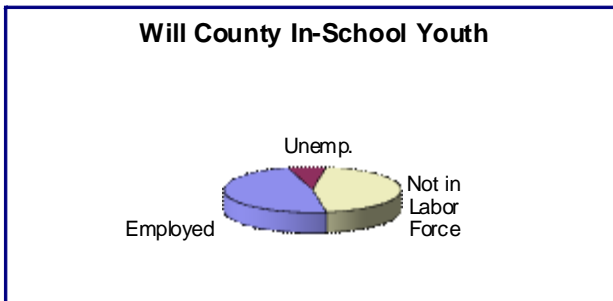
Source: U.S. Census, 2000

¹² Data is not available for 2007 for Joliet, Will and DuPage Counties because their population is less than 1,000,000 people so the data presented is from the 2000 census.

¹³ Does not include military employment.

¹⁴ Data is not available for 2007 for Joliet, Will and DuPage Counties because their population is less than 1,000,000 people so the data presented is from the 2000 census.

¹⁵ Does not include military employment.



While nearly half of the “in-school” youth population are employed, it is a concern that 29% of the youth who are “not in-school” are also not in the labor force. This represents five percent of all 16-19 year olds in Will County. Chapin Hall Center for Children identifies these youth as “Disconnected”. Reasons for this “disconnection” could include parenting, disability, incarceration, or simply a detachment from the world of work. The connection and preparation of these youth for work is critical in order to ensure future employment success and the continued economic vitality of Will County.

On January 23, 2009, the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Statistics, released findings from its first 10 annual rounds of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997. *America’s Youth at 21: School Enrollment, Training, and Employment Transitions Between Ages 20 and 21*¹⁶ provides highlights from this national survey of about 9,000 young men and women who were born during the years 1980 to 1984. These respondents were ages 12 to 17 when first interviewed in 1997, and ages 21 to 27 when interviewed for the 10th time in 2006-07.

Highlights from this report include:

- Among 21 year-olds, 36% of men were enrolled in college compared with 46% women.
- Of the 20 year-olds enrolled in college, 82% were still enrolled when age 21. Non-Hispanic blacks and Hispanics were less likely than whites to continue their college enrollment between ages 20 and 21.
- Ten percent of male high school graduates who had never enrolled in college were in the Armed Forces during the October when they were age 21, as were 6% of the 21 year-old men who had attended college but were no longer enrolled.
- Thirty seven (37%) percent of high school dropouts and 19% of high school graduates not enrolled in college were neither employed nor in training during the October when they were 21.
- Among high school dropouts, 39% of non-Hispanic blacks were not employed in either the October when they were age 20 or the October when they were age 21 compared with 24 percent of Hispanics and 19 percent of non-Hispanic whites.
- High school graduates not enrolled in college were employed an average of 77% of the weeks between the October when they were age 20 and the following October. By comparison, those who had dropped out of high school were employed 57% of those weeks.
- By age 21, about 1 in 4 young adults who had never gone to college had been employed by the same employer for two (2) or more years since they left school. Five (5%) percent had never held a job since they left school.

¹⁶ America’s Youth at 21: School Enrollment, Training, and Employment Transitions Between Ages 20 and 21, U.S. Department of Labor 09-0079, January 23, 2009.

The U.S. Department of Labor recently released the *Employment and Unemployment Among Youth—Summer 2009*¹⁷. Traditionally, employment during the summer months for youth increases, but this year the proportion of young people who were employed in July was 51.4%, which is the lowest July rate on record for the series, which began in 1948. The July 2009 labor force participation rate, the proportion of their population working or looking for work, was down by 2.1 percentage points from July 2008 and the lowest July rate since 1955.

4.4 million youth were unemployed in July 2009, up by nearly 1.0 million from July 2008. The youth unemployment rate was 18.5% in July 2009, which is the highest July rate on record for the series which began in 1948. As with the decline in employment, the increase in youth unemployment in the summer of 2009 reflected a weak job market.

United States				
Summer Employment Status of Youth Ages 16 – 24				
Numbers in Thousands – Data not seasonally adjusted				
	2006	2007	2008	2009
Civilian Population	36,989	37,443	37,506	37,586
Civilian Labor Force	24,664	24,339	24,429	23,691
Participation Rate	66.7	65.0	65.1	63.0
Youth Employed	21,914	21,717	21,021	19,304
Employment Population Ratio	59.2	58.0	56.0	51.4
Youth Unemployed	2,750	2,622	3,408	4,387
Looking for Full-time work	2,028	1,892	2,552	3,430
Looking for Part-time work	722	730	856	957
Unemployment Rate	11.2	10.8	14.0	18.5
Not in Labor Force	12,324	13,104	13,076	13,895

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009

In the 2004 news release by the US Department of Labor¹⁸ some of the top occupations for youth were identified as: Cooks, Cashiers, Stock Handlers and Baggers, Construction Laborers, Janitors, Sales Workers, Groundskeepers, Waiters and Waitresses, Office Clerks, Receptionists, Nursing Aides, and Farm Workers. Although these are primarily part-time, entry-level, low wage jobs, they have a range of responsibilities that include handling money, establishing customer relationships, satisfying customers, training or managing other workers, assisting the sick, as well as some specific occupational responsibilities such as in the construction and clerical occupations.

Recently published studies in psychology, economics, and sociology have addressed the question of what works and what does not in programs that prepare youth for workforce participation. Research differs over methods and appropriate outcomes to measure, but the literature reveals a tenuous consensus on the following points:

- Preparing young people for careers involves basic supports, skill development, and a broad array of developmentally appropriate enrichment activities, in addition to job training^a.
- Over the past 20 years, it has become harder for youth without a high school diploma to obtain stable employment^b.
- Wages for jobs requiring only a high school diploma have been decreasing over the past 50 years^c.

¹⁷ Employment and Unemployment Among Youth—Summer 2009. U.S. Department of Labor 09-1021, August 2009.

¹⁸ Employment of Teenagers during the School Year and Summer, U.S. Department of Labor 04-217, February 2004.

- Youths' perceptions of the future, peer culture, and level and quality of parental involvement heavily influence their success in school and in work^d.
- Youth with multiple risk factors require intensive supportive services as part of their preparation for the workforce^e.

Poverty and race are widely used indications of risk for a host of negative outcomes including low achievement in school and work. Children defined as being "at-risk" are often poor children of African American and/or Hispanic origin. Discrimination, increased parental stress, and decreased parental monitoring are some of the reasons often cited in explaining why poor minority children fare worse on average than other children^f. In addition, youth who have already dropped out of high school are at greater risk of failure in the workplace as adults^g, especially youth who are both high school dropouts and unemployed^h, and youth who have never enrolled in collegeⁱ.

Successful career preparation for youth requires a holistic approach linking job training to education, encouraging students to finish high school, and taking into account the specific developmental needs of youth in diverse family and neighborhood contexts.

What kinds of employment opportunities await youth in Will County?

The Will County economy is driven by occupations that require a high level of skill and knowledge, such as computers/mathematics/science occupations, management, construction trades, health care practitioners, and engineers. There are good jobs with growth potential and high wages at every level of educational preparation. The top occupations by the average annual wage in each of three educational levels are listed below. These tables can help youth understand what their opportunities are within relative levels of educational attainment.

Education & Training category 1 includes those jobs that require:

- First professional degree
- Doctor's degree
- Master's degree
- Degree plus work experience
- Bachelor's degree

TOP 10 JOBS BY WAGE EDUCATION & TRAINING CATEGORY 1	Average Annual Wage
1. Dentists	\$137,550
2. Judges, Magistrate Judges, Magistrates	\$132,080
3. Physicians and Surgeons	\$122,429
4. Education Administrators, Elementary and Secondary	\$122,221
5. Engineering Managers	\$90,750
6. Orthodontists	\$90,066
7. Chemical Engineers	\$87,901
8. Secondary School Teachers, except special /vocat	\$87,214
9. General and Operations Managers	\$84,656
10. Teachers and Instructors, all other	\$83,886

Source: EMSI Jobs by Occupation Report, 2009

Education & Training category 2 includes those jobs that require:

- Associate's degree
- Postsecondary vocational award

TOP 10 JOBS BY WAGE EDUCATION & TRAINING CATEGORY 2	Average Annual Wage
1. Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	\$64,605
2. Dental Hygienists	\$64,106
3. Radiation Therapists	\$64,043
4. Nuclear Medicine Technologists	\$62,546
5. Electrical and electronics drafters	\$59,571
6. Registered Nurses	\$58,386
7. Commercial Pilots	\$56,571
8. Fish and Game Wardens	\$56,056
9. Radiologic Technologists	\$55,682
10. Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	\$55,182

Source: EMSI Jobs by Occupation Report, 2009

Education & Training category 3 includes those jobs that require:

- Work experience in a related occupation
- Long-term on-the-job training
- Moderate-term on-the-job training
- Short-term on-the-job training

TOP 10 JOBS BY WAGE EDUCATION & TRAINING CATEGORY 3	Average Annual Wage
1. Industrial Production Managers	\$94,723
2. Air Traffic Controllers	\$92,435
3. First Line Supervisors/Managers of Fire Fighting	\$87,194
4. Elevator installers and repairers	\$84,781
5. First Line Supervisors/Managers of Police/Detectives	\$77,459
6. Structural iron and steel workers	\$75,317
7. Carpet Installers	\$72,093
8. Transportation, Storage and Distribution Managers	\$69,389
9. Operating Engineers and other Construction Equip	\$69,555
10. Boilermakers	\$68,994

Source: EMSI Jobs by Occupation Report, 2009

What Skills are Needed for 21st Century Jobs?

There continues to be a need for a skilled workforce in Will County as it continues to grow and it is important to understand the skills needed by employers in the 21st Century. There are many models outlining the skill sets needed in today's workplace, but one of the better framings comes from the Northwest Center for Emerging Technologies (NWCET) and the report *Building a Foundation for Tomorrow*¹⁹ published in 2000. Originally intended to serve as the framework for information technology, these crosscutting skills represent an excellent view for all new economy and industries.

Northwest Center for Emerging Technology (NWCET) Employability Skills - Employers are often quoted by workforce professionals as saying "just give me someone with basic skills and I'll train him/her myself." Yet, there is no consensus on the definition of basic skills and when more than one employer is asked, you may get more than one definition. Workforce professionals will also agree to disagree on what is meant by basic skills. More often than not, employers are looking for people who have the right attitude, have good "work ethics," are good team players, and like to learn.

NWCET Employability Skills:

- *Communication Skills*
- *Organizational Skills*
- *Team Contribution and Leadership*
- *Professionalism*
- *Critical Thinking and Decision Making*
- *Customer Relations*
- *Self-Directed and Continuous Learning*

NWCET Cross-Sector Core Skill Areas

- *Project Management.*
- *Task Management.*
- *Problem-Solving / Troubleshooting*

NWCET Core Curriculum²⁰

- *Analytical Skills and Problem Solving*
- *Business Organization and Environment.*
- *Coordination and Communication Skills.*
- *Project and Process Flow Skills.*
- *Core Computer Software and Hardware Skills*
- *Core Field of Study Skills*

Computer knowledge, in particular, is becoming a "basic skill" as much as reading, writing, and arithmetic. At present, over half (56%) of all Americans over the age of 25 who are employed use a computer at work, and between 2004 and 2014, jobs in the information technology fields are expected to increase by 30%. In Illinois, 42 out of every 1,000 private sector workers are employed by high-tech firms (29th in nation). Illinois is 7th in the nation for the overall number of high-tech workers and 13th for average high-tech wage. However, in 14% of schools in Illinois, the majority of teachers (at least half) are 'beginners' in

¹⁹ Project developed in part by the National Science Foundation. Partners included MicroSoft, The Boeing Company, American Association of Community Colleges, American Electronics Association, Educational Development Center, Department of Commerce, and Department of Labor, and others.

²⁰ Referred to as "IT Core Curriculum" in publication; the author of this report has omitted the "IT" to more accurately reflect the all-industry need

using technology (national average is 15%), according to The Children's Partnership²¹. Low income households are unlikely to have home computers and Internet access, which means youth from those households will be less prepared for the higher paying, high technology jobs of the future. This makes it all the more critical that such youth be provided opportunities by well-trained teachers in the classroom and by youth service organizations.

A report by the American Association of University Women finds a growing gap between boys and girls in the use of technology and in taking higher-level computer courses. Girls tend to follow traditional "female career paths", taking lower-level data entry and work processing courses, while boys are more likely to be found in the higher level computer courses. Thus, the "technology gap" not only impacts generations (young people are more technologically proficient than adults) and low-income youth, but also genders.

The top occupations and "basic skills" have implications for educators and youth service providers. How will youth acquire these skills and knowledge in the classroom? How can work-based learning opportunities be developed for the occupations within each level of educational attainment so that all youth can benefit regardless of their educational aspirations? How can youth connect the skills and knowledge sets learned in their current after-school and summer employment to how such skills are applied in the real world? How do jobs in food service, retail stores, theater, childcare and grocery stores contribute to preparing youth for the leading occupations, and how can we make those experiences richer?

While a large percentage of Will County youth are employed, those youth not in-school and not employed need to acquire the important skills to be successful in the workplace. Youth need help making career and skill acquisition decisions based on their educational aspirations (do they plan, and are they able, to climb the ladder through on-the-job training kinds of employment, or get a two-year degree or higher?), labor market information that shows what occupations and skills are in demand, and their personal interests. Youth service providers need to ensure that work experience is of high quality; i.e., includes the use of higher cognitive skills and offers significant interaction with caring adults.

²¹ www.childrenspartnership.org

Education: How do they stack up?

National studies indicate that there is a correlation between socio-economics and educational success. Given that Will County is a prosperous area with well-educated and employed parents, we can expect to see relatively positive outcomes from the school systems. However, it has already been noted that within this affluent county there are many young people still facing poverty, disability, or cultural/language barriers, many of who will need extra assistance in transitioning to adulthood.

2007 Enrollment in School Will County					
	Joliet	Will	DuPage	Cook	Illinois
Nursery School/Preschool	3,209	15,401	18,723	102,031	245,053
Kindergarten	1,459	9,135	13,839	73,301	176,037
Elementary: grade 1-8	17,767	82,108	104,749	593,479	1,413,942
Elementary: grade 9-12	7,452	41,620	56,985	310,359	753,462
College, undergraduate or graduate	7,639	46,284	71,658	367,667	939,330

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2007

Some of the indicators of future success of young people are graduation rates, dropout rates, percentage of low-income students, mobility, and truancy rates. Additionally, testing scores can be an indicator of success. High school achievement can be a predictor of postsecondary persistence.

The following tables give us a snapshot of Will County schools as measured through the Illinois School Report Card System. Federal legislation requires that school report cards be publicly available. Illinois currently uses the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) to measure the achievement of grade 11 students relative to the Illinois Learning Standards for reading, mathematics, and science.

Student Characteristics 2008					
School	Dropout	Low Income	Mobility	Chronic Truancy	Graduation
Illinois	4.1%	41.1%	14.9%	2.5%	86.5%
Beecher High School	0.5%	5.9%	2.6%	0.0%	87.1%
Bolingbrook High School	5.3%	35.0%	16.7%	8.6%	83.5%
Crete Monee High School	0.5%	39.1%	20.2%	4.8%	96.7%
Joliet Central High School	5.5%	69.1%	7.9%	1.2%	75.4%
Joliet West High School	2.6%	42.0%	8.1%	1.3%	86.4%
Lincoln-Way Central High School	0.7%	4.7%	5.1%	0.2%	98.0%
Lincoln-Way East High School	0.9%	4.1%	5.1%	0.9%	93.5%
Lockport Township High School	2.4%	6.3%	8.0%	2.6%	92.2%
Minooka Community High School ²²	1.3%	3.9%	6.8%	3.0%	84.0%
Neuqua Valley High School	0.2%	1.9%	4.4%	0.2%	100.0%
Peotone High School	0.5%	8.9%	4.9%	0.4%	96.7%
Plainfield High School	0.7%	10.9%	14.3%	5.6%	98.9%
Plainfield South High School	0.6%	10.5%	12.2%	2.6%	96.8%
Reed Custer High School	0.0%	27.7%	7.5%	2.2%	100.0%
Romeoville High School	3.7%	33.0%	17.5%	11.1%	88.7%
Wilmington High School	3.6%	20.8%	13.3%	2.3%	83.3%

Source: Illinois Interactive Report Card²³

Overall, Will County High Schools are performing fairly well in comparison with Illinois averages. Nearly all Will County high schools have a lower dropout rate than the State of Illinois and a majority of the high schools in Will County have a higher graduation rate than the State of Illinois as a whole. Studies indicate that many factors can impact student education success, including poverty and mobility. Some of these factors are detailed in other sections of this report.

²² While Minooka Community High School is in Grundy County, 2 of the 3 elementary districts that feed into Minooka Community High School represent Will County communities.

²³ <http://iirc.niu.edu>

Student Performance Prairie State Achievement Examination²⁴ 2008			
School	Reading	Mathematics	Science
Illinois	53.0%	53.0%	51.0%
Beecher High School	59.0%	49.0%	59.0%
Bolingbrook High School	53.0%	55.0%	50.0%
Crete Monee High School	32.0%	31.0%	32.0%
Joliet Central High School	43.0%	39.0%	37.0%
Joliet West High School	48.0%	46.0%	41.0%
Lincoln-Way Central High School	76.0%	71.0%	73.0%
Lincoln-Way East High School	77.0%	71.0%	74.0%
Lockport Township High School	61.0%	64.0%	61.0%
Minooka Community High School	67.0%	61.0%	65.0%
Neuqua Valley High School	75.0%	77.0%	78.0%
Peotone High School	56.0%	51.0%	60.0%
Plainfield High School	52.0%	54.0%	51.0%
Plainfield South High School	52.0%	51.0%	50.0%
Reed Custer High School	62.0%	60.0%	62.0%
Romeoville High School	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%
Wilmington High School	51.0%	48.0%	47.0%

Source: Illinois Interactive Report Card, 2009

The Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) measures the performance of grade 11 students in reading, mathematics, and science. PSAE measures individual student achievement relative to the Illinois Learning Standards. Curriculum experts and Illinois teachers have developed these standards in collaboration with the Illinois State Board of Education. Results are reported by subject according to four performance levels: exceeds standards, meets standards, below standards, and academic warning. The chart above indicates the percentage of students from each high school who either met or exceeded the standard for each of the three performance areas. Just over half of the high schools in Will County had a higher percentage of students who met or exceeded the three standards than the State of Illinois

²⁴ Represents percentage of students who meet or exceed standard.

**High School
Teacher/Administration Characteristics
2008**

SCHOOL	Average Teaching Experience (years)	Percent Teachers with Masters Degree	Average Teacher Salary	Pupil: Teacher Ratio	Pupil: Administrator Ratio	Per Pupil Instructional Expenditure
Illinois	12	53%	\$60,871	18:1	211:1	\$5,808
Beecher CUSD 200U	10	50%	\$46,812	18:1	223:1	\$4,381
Crete CUSD 201U	10	40%	\$54,459	21:1	153:1	\$4,769
Joliet Township HS Dist. 204 - Joliet Central High School - Joliet West High School	11	54%	\$63,071	22:1	153:1	\$7,636
Lincoln-Way Comm. HS Dist. 210 - Lincoln-Way Central High School - Lincoln-Way East High School	10	68%	\$69,633	19:1	285:1	\$5.069
Lockport Township HS Dist. 205	12	71%	\$66,105	22:1	228:1	\$5,973
Minooka Com. HS Dist. 111	10	52%	\$59,308	19:1	223:1	\$5,717
Neuqua Valley High School Dist. 204	10	62%	\$63,240	17:1	388:1	\$5,749
Peotone CUSD 207U	13	38%	\$44,002	19:1	224:1	\$5,428
Plainfield School District 202	8	49%	\$52,563	19:1	275:1	\$5,032
Reed Custer CUSD 255U	18	89%	\$71,000	17:1	186:1	\$6,727
Valley View CUSD #365U - Bolingbrook High School - Romeoville High School	9	45%	\$58,312	19:1	308:1	\$6,080
Wilmington CUSD 209U	11	34%	\$44,424	16:1	192:1	\$3,806

Source: Illinois Interactive Report Card, 2009

Teacher salaries and experience in Will County vary from district to district, usually depending on the percentage of teachers with Masters Degrees and above. Pupil to student teacher ratios also varies, with some correlations to achievement. Eight of the above-referenced high schools fall below the State of Illinois per pupil instructional expenditure rate.

Will County schools are doing well, but unequally. National reports indicate that income levels may predict academic success more so than student-teacher ratios or truancy rates. Based on this, it is important to provide low-income youth with the extra supports they need to be successful. Community services that focus on mentoring, school retention, and tutoring should concentrate in areas that have the highest incidence of low-income students. In addition, all students should be encouraged to take rigorous coursework in high school to increase their chances of postsecondary success (both two and four year) and labor market success.

Provider Network: Who is serving youth?

A database of providers of youth services is available at the following website:

<http://www.youthfuturesmetro.com>

The searchable website provides information on providers from Will County and the other Counties in the Chicago metro region. Workforce preparation was the main focus of the providers on the website from the counties surrounding Will County. However, the Workforce Investment Board of Will County and the Will County Juvenile Justice Council saw a need to expand the provider information to include a much larger range of services, including mental health, recreation, counseling, mentoring, and juvenile justice, just to name a few. For a complete listing of services see Appendix C.

There are over 200 youth providers listed in the Will County section of the YouthFutures website. More than one third of the providers listed on the website indicate that they serve 500 or more youth each year. About three fourths of all the providers indicate that they offer some type of supportive service to youth even if that is not the main mission of their organization.

The information collected in the youth resource mapping survey and produced on the YouthFutures website can assist youth providers and policy makers with the following:

- Increase knowledge and understanding of youth services in the County
- Promote community awareness of youth programs
- Advocate for additional resources
- Address underserved areas through policy and program planning.

FINAL COMMENTS

It goes without question that the issues discussed in this report are much deeper and much more complicated than can be included in a few pages. Additionally, many strategies that are currently in place will require more time to show results.

In Will County, as in comparable areas across the country, the focus on youth is taking a more comprehensive view that includes all possible areas of concern. Will County has a large number and variety of organizations that are committed to changing environments to benefit our youth. The continued work of these organizations can assist in providing positive youth development programs for the youth of Will County.

Many youth in the County experience similar risk factors that can affect their educational attainment and future success in the labor market. Meeting the challenges posed by child and youth poverty, unmet educational needs, and racial minority status may provide a foundation for future efforts.

Those efforts will include periodic review of the data in this report to document successes and identify important trends. In addition, more analysis will be done regarding critical youth issues and the providers who address those issues to determine gaps in service and future need.

APPENDIX A - Youth focus group results

All issues identified in the three youth focus groups are listed below in alphabetical order. Youth participating in these focus groups prioritized these issues and the top 15 are listed on page 6 of this report.

Activities for Students (more)	Jobs (Youth Employment)
Adult/Youth Respect (Communication Issues)	Lack of Parental Involvement
Anger Management	Lack of Trusting Adults
Authority Figures & Problem Children	Making Good Decisions
Bad Behavior	Peer Pressure
Bullying	Physical/Emotional Abuse
College/Career Concerns	Pressure to do Well
Community Security	Profiling
Crime/Theft	Quality Education; Better Student/Teacher ratio
Death of Loved Ones	Racism
Depression/Suicide	Relationships
Divorce	Role Models
Driving under the Influence	School Safety
Drugs/Alcohol	Self Image/Self Esteem
Early Intervention with Anger, Miscellaneous	Self-Mutilation
Mental Health issues	Sex/Pregnancy/STD's Support Group
Eating Disorders	Sibling Rivalry
Excessive Competition	Social Status/Cliques
Finding Help	Sticking With/Knowing Your Morals
Gangs	Stress
Gay/Lesbian discrimination	Suicide
Grades	Swearing
Health/Affordable Recreation	Transportation
Homelessness/Safe Housing	Violence/Weapons
Hope (Lack of)	Zero Tolerance Enforcement
Insecurity	

APPENDIX B -Data Sources

Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT, <http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/>

The Children's Partnership, www.childrenspartnership.org

Heartland Alliance Mid-America Institute on Poverty, <http://www.heartlandalliance.org>

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, <http://www.icjia.state.il.us>

Illinois Interactive Report Card, <http://iirc.niu.edu>

Profile of Juvenile Justice System Activities and Juvenile Delinquency Risk Factors in Will County
<http://www.icjia.state.il.us/public/pdf/juvenilecounty/will.pdf>

U.S. Census, <http://www.census.gov>

U.S. Department of Labor, <http://www.dol.gov>

Voices for Illinois Children, <http://www.voices4kids.org>

Will County Coroner, <http://www.willcountyllinois.com/coron1/2003annualreport.htm>

Will County Health Department, <http://www.willcountyhealth.org>

Will County State of the Workforce Report,
<http://www.willcountyworkforceboard.com/stateofworkforce.htm>

APPENDIX C - Provider Survey Service List

Career Preparation Services

- Introductory Career Preparation Services
 - Career day/career fair
 - Career field trips/workplace tours
 - Host guest teachers/speakers focused on career exposure/exploration
 - College tours
- Work-based Career Preparation Services
 - Paid internship
 - Unpaid internship
 - Job shadowing
 - Job coaching
 - Job placement
 - Corporate/professional mentorship programs
 - Service learning tied to workforce preparation goals
 - Work-based learning projects
 - Youth apprenticeships
 - Cooperative education (school program offers youth work during school hours)
 - Job training
- Curriculum-based Career Preparation Services
 - Career information infused into curriculum/program activities
 - Career skills course (soft skills curriculum, interviewing skills)
 - School-based enterprise activities (Junior Achievement)
 - Career/college focused student club/activities
 - Tech prep/2+2 curriculum/career technical education curriculum
 - Dual enrollment
 - Career cluster or pathway focused curriculum
- Career/Academic Advising Services
 - Academic planning/counseling
 - College advising
 - Financial planning/advising (assistance with college scholarships/financial aid)
 - Assistance with college application
 - College admission testing (guidance, tutoring)
 - Parent-student conferences
 - Career assessment/computer-assisted career guidance
 - Career counseling
 - Career resources center/job reference library
 - Informational interviewing
 - Employer recruiting activities

Enrichment Services

- Academic enrichment
 - Academic summer programs
 - Tutoring
 - High school academic preparation programs
 - College academic preparation programs
 - College-based or college-level courses/programs
- Personal enrichment and social integration services
 - Leadership activities
 - Arts and cultural activities
 - Music programs
 - Sports programs
 - Peer centered activities
 - Drop in
 - Community service
 - Technology programs
- Mentoring
 - Adult volunteer-based mentoring to support youth development
 - Peer-based mentoring
- Parental involvement services
 - Programs for parents
 - Orientation to youth programs for parents
 - Parent volunteer activities
 - Employ parents as staff

Supportive Services

- Outreach services for youth
- Physical health services
- Mental health services
- Substance abuse services
- Crisis intervention
- Homeless youth services
- Child protection services
- Teen parent services
- Family programs
- Food pantry/food assistance programs
- Violence prevention/education
- Transportation
- English as a second language (ESL)

Endnotes

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