

Critical Skill Shortages Initiative

What is the Critical Skill Shortages Initiative?

The Critical Skill Shortages Initiative is part of an unprecedented plan to distribute training funds throughout the state in an effort to create jobs and spur economic growth in Illinois.

Launched by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) as part of the Governor's Opportunity Returns

initiative, the goals of the Critical Skill Shortages Initiative are to identify the key sectors and industries that drive our regional economy, determine occupational shortages



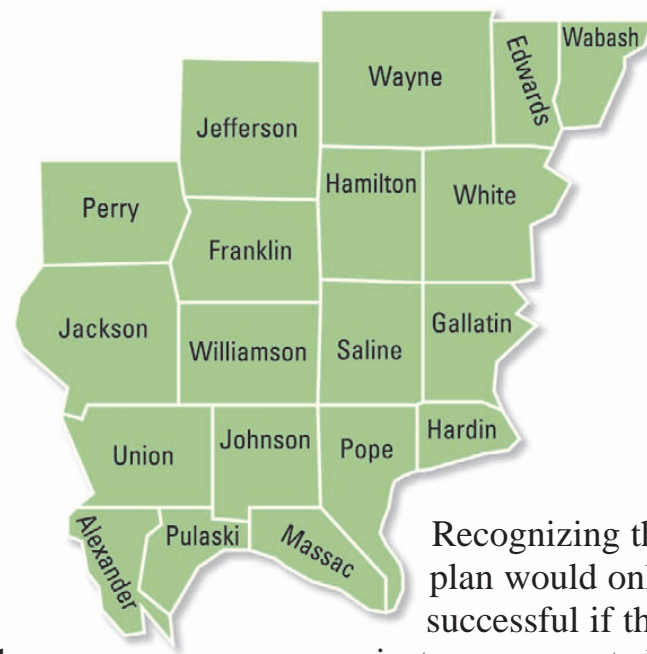
within those sectors, and develop solutions.

What is the process for the initiative?

As part of the plan to create jobs and spur growth in Illinois, the state was divided into ten Economic

Development Regions. The counties of Workforce Investment Areas 25 and 26 were combined to form one of these regions

called the Southern Economic Development Region (SEDR). The Southern region is composed of the southernmost 19 counties of Illinois: Alexander, Edwards,



Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Massac, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Saline, Union, Wabash, Wayne, White and Williamson.

Staff from the Southern 14 Workforce Investment Board and the Southern Illinois Workforce Investment Board joined forces to prepare and execute a plan of action for the activities of the initiative. ManTraCon, Corp. of

Marion was designated by the workforce boards to be the grant administrator for the initiative.



Recognizing that the plan would only be successful if the project was supported by many different groups and individuals throughout the 19 county region, the Workforce Boards implemented a plan to include the following key entities: Business & Industry, Economic Development, Education, Labor & Workforce Development.

Individuals from each of these groups have met for the past year to identify the industries vital to our economy. Registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and occupations within the

Southern Economic Development Region



manufacturing, distribution, transportation, and warehousing industries were identified as critical sectors/occupations within the 19 county region, therefore, these industries were targeted for training funds by the grant.

Successful steps with the initiative

- Over 200 individuals from business, labor, education, workforce development and economic development throughout the 19 county

region participated by helping to identify not only the industries vital to the economy of our region; but also the reasons for worker shortages and potential solutions for worker shortages.

- The SEDR was awarded a planning grant for the initiative in the amount of \$156,870 to assist with identifying the industries and occupations critical to the 19 counties.

- To date, the SEDR has been awarded a Healthcare Training Grant in the amount of \$558,000 to implement: a Mentor/Tutor Program for LPN & ADN



students at local community colleges; a full-color supplement to appear in the Southern Business Journal showcasing healthcare providers and career



opportunities; and tuition and supportive service benefits for WIA eligible nursing students. A Training Grant for the Manufacturing Sector was submitted to DCEO in

November requesting \$382,224 in grant funds to support the following: implementation of a foundation skills training program and a full-color supplement to appear in the Southern Business Journal to showcase local manufacturers.

For additional information regarding the Critical Skill Shortages Initiative, please visit:

<http://www.siwib.org/cssi>

Questions about the initiative?

Please feel free to contact these individuals if you have additional questions regarding the Critical Skill Shortages Initiative:

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