

Illinois workNet™ Partnership Policy

Southern 14 Workforce Investment Board, Inc., LWIA #26

The intent of the Local Illinois workNet™ Partnership Policy is to:

I. ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIP GOALS

- a. Expand access to workforce services beyond traditional partnerships.
- b. Provide the benefits of participating with the workforce system network to partner organizations.
- c. Educate local organizations on the workforce system and how it fits with their mission and services.
- d. Brand partners to convey a cohesive continuum of services.
- e. Ensure, across local geographies and demographics that all communities are being served in ways that best meet their needs.
- f. Develop long-lasting partnerships that are mutually beneficial.
- g. Set goals for the quantity of partners.
- h. Define outcomes that will benefit partners, community members, and LWIA #26.

II. IDENTIFY PARTNERSHIP ROLES

Illinois workNet partners are organizations that provide access to the Illinois workNet Portal and/or disseminate marketing materials to promote use of the Illinois workNet Portal.

The 3 categories of Illinois workNet partnerships are:

1. **Access/Service Provider Sites:** WIOA funded partners and other partners that disseminate information about the Portal, use Illinois workNet to assist their clients, provide public internet access computers or provide internet access computers to their clients or students. These sites also provide services to the benefit of their clients such as preparing for career transition, training, assisting businesses, and connecting to work support services. Further, these organizations maintain staff for the purpose of providing services.
2. **Access Site:** Site is not WIOA funded and provides access to the Portal to assist their clients but does not provide services beyond access. For example, a library is an access site because a client may access the Portal via a computer at the library but they do not provide services beyond connecting the individual to resources.
2. **Dissemination Sites:** Partner site that disseminates the information and refers customers to Illinois workNet. These sites may not have internet access or a place for public access computers.

II. **RESEARCH POTENTIAL PARTNERS**

Potential Illinois workNet Partners include existing Workforce Investment Act mandated partners and non-mandated organizations, including community-based and faith-based organizations, local chambers of commerce, education entities, social service organizations, and libraries in your local LWIA that help individuals connect to career planning, job search, job readiness, education/training, and/or work support services and resources. Partners also include business services.

- a. **Determine if a potential partner is a good fit** – Partners may include agencies and organizations that already provide services within the Illinois Workforce System and agencies and organizations that are not traditionally within the System but will benefit by using the Portal as a means to provide free and easy access to career and training transition, business service resources for staff and customers, workforce support resources and training for staff.

- b. **Identify any accessibility issues (per WIOA EO policy)** – Determine accessibility both programmatically (public computer use) and architecturally (facility). Programmatic accessibility views a program in its entirety and must be available when architectural accessibility is not required. Architectural accessibility deals with the actual location/facility and ensures an individual with a disability has equal access to a facility as a person without a disability.

Any partner that receives **WIOA** funds **must** comply with all EO accessibility requirements. This means they must ensure any person with a disability has equal access to facilities and/or programs including any necessary reasonable accommodations. Not all partners will have customers come to their facility or allow public access to computers, but should consider the following for the non-**WIOA** funded partners:

- If they do have customers using their facility, their location should meet EO accessibility requirements.
- If they provide public-access computers, they should provide appropriate assistive technologies.
- If they work directly with the public, they should provide appropriate and reasonable accommodations upon request.

- c. **Organizations that are EXCLUDED from being an Illinois workNet partner include:**
- Agencies or groups that misrepresent their services in any way.
 - Agencies or groups that deny services on the basis of color, race, religion, sexual preference, or nationality.
 - Agencies or groups whose service is illegal.
 - Agencies or groups whose services cannot be verified.
 - Agencies or groups that have credible or serious complaints about their service registered against them.

III. EDUCATE POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND DEMONSTRATE THE BENEFITS OF PARTNERSHIP

The local partnership strategy for LWIA #26 is to:

- a. provide a consistent and positive branding message to community members.
- b. provide a means to convene networks of partner organizations that provide critical in-person and online services and resources.
- c. emphasize that access to the Portal and Course are FREE!
- d. expand access to people in the communities where they live and work.
- e. provide ease of use and access to quality resources and saves time and money by leveraging existing resources.
- f. connect the LWIB #26 community to local opportunities and resources to include those provided by partner organizations.
- g. include resources verified to be accurate and pertinent so users do not have to search for them.
- h. link customers to consistent information in the communities where they live and work.
- i. train staff on accessing and using career transition resources.
- j. assure consistent access and quality to customers.

LWIA #26 will use the Rebranding Marketing templates and Illinois workNet Partner Buy-in Kit materials to provide a consistent message on the benefits of partnership.

IV. ESTABLISH AND DEFINE THE ROLES OF THE PARTNERSHIPS

The partnership process will ensure that partnerships are officially established and provide assurances that each partner clearly understands their role. In lieu of written agreements, partnerships are confirmed by establishing a partner event where the mutual benefits across all partners are acknowledged and defined. At this event, partners are provided clear lines of communication and resources. LWIA #26 will use the Rebranding Marketing Plan to customize local marketing materials provided in the Resource Room Starter Kits.

V. INITIATE ONGOING COMMUNICATION AND EVENTS THAT FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS

LWIA #26 will implement an ongoing partner communication plan to ensure that partners are engaged in a consistent and timely manner. The plan will identify types of communication, when communication will be released, and who will be responsible for initiating the communication. Communication will include regularly scheduled:

- Phone calls
- Information emails
- Partner meetings and events
- Visits to partner sites

VI. ASSESS THE PARTNERSHIPS TO DETERMINE IF THEY SHOULD CONTINUE OR BE REDEFINED

As partnerships evolve they will be continually assessed. Checkpoints will be established at least annually for the purpose of determining if partnerships should continue, be redefined, or ended. A set of criteria and questions will be used to ensure that the assessment is consistent across all partners. Examples of criteria and questions include:

- Question: Has the mission and, therefore services offered by the partner changed?
- Criteria: Partners will provide resources or services that fit within the continuum of services needed by individuals and/or businesses to increase their chances for economic success.
- Question: Has the partner fully participated with meetings, events, and other activities?
- Criteria: All partners agree to fully participate based on their pre-defined roles.
- Question: Has the partner organization and their customers benefited from the partnership?
- Criteria: Partners will provide resources or services to the direct benefit of individuals and/or businesses.
- Question: As a result of the partnership have planned outcomes been met?

- Criteria: The partner plan was implemented based upon meeting predefined outcomes.
- Question: Has the partnership expanded access to the virtual and physical workforce system?
- Criteria: Partnerships will fill gaps in geographic areas to assure access to both the virtual and physical workforce systems.
- Question: Has the community benefited from the partner?
- Criteria: Community members will directly benefit from access to and knowledge of partner services.
- Question: Was the original intent of the partnership fulfilled?
- Criteria: The partnership was in keeping with the predefined role.
- Question: Has the partnership impacted the continuum of workforce services in a positive way?
- Criteria: Individuals and businesses have a variety of needs that are directly impacted by changing circumstances in their environment, and because needs vary, partners have carried out an important role in providing specialized services.
- Question: Are customers satisfied with the quality of the partner's services?
- Criteria: Partners will provide a consistent quality of services.

The checkpoints will also include LWIA #26 assessing their role in the partnerships by providing a means for the partners to provide feedback on how they could further enhance relationships and what they should change in the partnership process to improve outcomes. Examples of questions to ask partners include:

- Has the partner organization benefited from the partnership?
- Has the partner's customers benefited from the partnership?
- Was the extent of the partnership fully understood?
- Were communications too often or just right?
- Were the partner activities beneficial to the partner and what would the partner change?
- How could the LWIB/LWIA do a better job of building partnerships?
- What would you like to do more of and less of?
- Was the training beneficial to your staff and customers?
- Would you like to continue as a partner? If not, why? If yes, why?

As partnerships are redefined, added, or ended the local Illinois workNet Coordinator will keep the Illinois workNet Site Management Database up to date.

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