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NEW REPORT: COMMUNITIES FROM ACROSS ILLINOIS CALL FOR INVESTMENT IN SKILLS

Says state-level leaders must translate local innovation into state-level strategies for building Illinois' workforce skills

CHICAGO (Sept. 7, 2011) – By the year 2018, 64% of jobs in Illinois will require post-secondary training beyond high school, but nearly two million working age adults in Illinois have only a high school degree or less - a skills crisis that local leaders say, in a new report from the [Illinois Works for the Future Campaign](#) (IWF), will limit economic prosperity for Illinois' families, businesses, and communities.

IWF leadership worked with local leaders in five communities across the state and conducted a series of community forums to strategize about meeting their education and skills challenges now and in the future. As a culmination of the forums, ["Putting the Workforce at the Center of Economic Development: Leaders from across Illinois call for Investment in Skills"](#) finds that an integrated vision for workforce and economic development depends on both strong state policy and involvement of local leaders from communities across the state.

IWF calls for the state of Illinois to elevate investment in skills of the adult workforce to the top of its economic development priorities. In addition to the immediate implementation of the [21st Century Workforce Development Fund](#), IWF recommends that state policymakers work to:

- Develop career pathways for low-skilled adults;
- Further advance the integration of workforce development and economic development policy and strategy; and
- Support innovation in communities and regions with smaller populations, so that they can be competitive for state, federal, and private workforce funding opportunities

Illinois' communities are well poised to advance skill-building strategies to support local employers and provide opportunities for their local workforce. State-level leaders must now take the reign in ensuring that local innovation translates into state-level strategies to build the skills of the workforce and ensure future economic competitiveness in Illinois.

The report can be found at: <http://ilworks4future.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/IWFCommForumReport.pdf>

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Illinois Works for the Future, an initiative of the Chicago Jobs Council, is a campaign with a mission to work with public and private partners statewide to integrate workforce and economic development. That means thinking outside the box to deliver job skills training and education in a way that is beneficial for workers, business, and the community. For more information, visit www.ilworks4future.org.

The Chicago Jobs Council is a 30-year old policy and advocacy organization that works with its members to ensure access to employment and career advancement opportunities for people living in poverty. For more information, visit www.cjc.net.