

# Illinois' Workforce Equity Initiative

Providing high-skill, high-wage outcomes for underrepresented individuals living in poverty





# Introductions

**Jennifer K. Foster, Deputy Executive Director, Illinois Community College Board**  
**Dawn Koeltzow, Project Director, Illinois Central College**



# Background on the Initiative

Jennifer K. Foster, Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)



WORKFORCE EQUITY INITIATIVE

# 18 Participating Colleges – WEI Consortium

- College of Lake County
- Heartland Community College
- Illinois Central College
- Kaskaskia College
- Kennedy King College
- Lincoln Land Community College
- Malcolm X College
- Oakton Community College
- Olive-Harvey College
- Parkland College
- Prairie State College
- Richard J. Daley College
- Richland Community College
- Rock Valley College
- South Suburban College
- Southwestern Illinois College
- Triton College
- Wilbur Wright College

*\*Note: Joliet Junior College Participated 20-21*

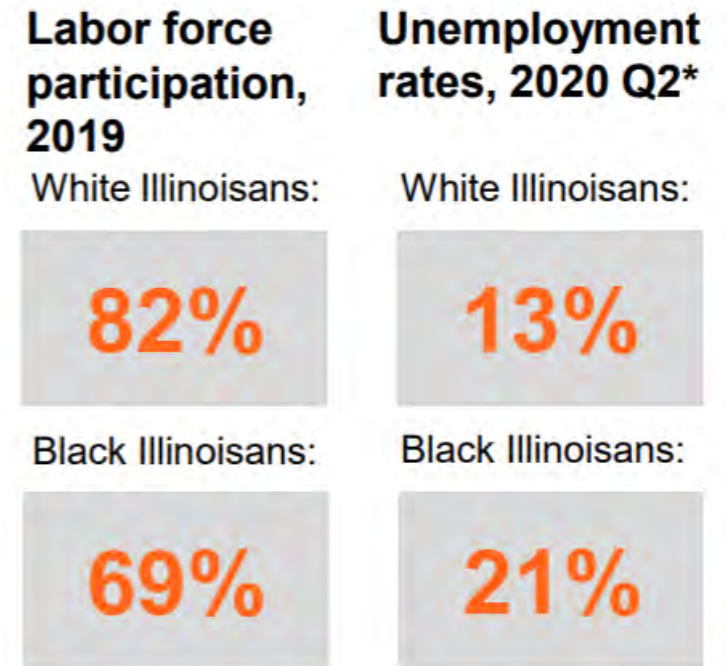
# Implemented in 2019

- **Public Act 101-0637** provided \$18.7 million dollars to respond to the increasing need to ensure workforce equity for African Americans in Illinois
- **The Illinois Legislative Black Caucus** partnered with the ICCB
- Collegiate-level degrees and certificates awarded to Illinois community college students in FY20 was approximately 65,000
  - Four out of ten were awarded to minority students
  - African American being among the lowest



# African American Community Need

- African Americans – declining participation in the community college system (10,283 AA students in FY15 to 6,951 in FY19)
- African Americans – lowest employment and credential outcomes
- Multigenerational Poverty Trend
- High Violence and Incarceration Rates



\*Disparities in unemployment rates pre-date COVID, but have been further exacerbated by the pandemic.

Source: IDES

# Student Completers in Illinois Community College System

## Fiscal Years 2018-2022

| Race/Ethnicity           | FY 18         | FY 19         | FY 20         | FY 21         | FY 22         | One- Year<br>% Change | Five- Year<br>% Change |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>African American</b>  | <b>7,093</b>  | <b>6,951</b>  | <b>7,331</b>  | <b>6,131</b>  | <b>6,700</b>  | <b>9.28%</b>          | <b>-5.54%</b>          |
| <b>Hispanic/Latinx</b>   | 12,145        | 12,181        | 14,564        | 13,684        | 14,460        | 5.67%                 | 19.06%                 |
| <b>Asian American</b>    | 2,521         | 2,589         | 2,791         | 2,716         | 2,871         | 5.59%                 | 13.88%                 |
| <b>Nonresident Alien</b> | 462           | 513           | 477           | 485           | 473           | -2.47%                | 2.38%                  |
| <b>Native American</b>   | 197           | 165           | 130           | 142           | 147           | 3.52%                 | -25.38%                |
| <b>Pacific Islander</b>  | 62            | 56            | 63            | 49            | 57            | 16.33%                | -8.06%                 |
| <b>Two or More Races</b> | 1,330         | 1,464         | 1,572         | 1,730         | 1,867         | 7.92%                 | 40.38%                 |
| <b>Minority Subtotal</b> | <b>23,810</b> | <b>23,919</b> | <b>26,928</b> | <b>24,940</b> | <b>26,575</b> | <b>6.56%</b>          | <b>11.61%</b>          |
| <b>Unknown</b>           | 1,811         | 1,626         | 1,647         | 1,660         | 1,808         | 8.92%                 | -0.12%                 |
| <b>White</b>             | 39,050        | 36,697        | 37,132        | 35,183        | 36,414        | 3.50%                 | -6.75%                 |
| <b>Grand Total</b>       | <b>64,671</b> | <b>62,242</b> | <b>65,707</b> | <b>61,783</b> | <b>64,797</b> | <b>4.88%</b>          | <b>0.19%</b>           |

# WEI Purpose

- **Create, support, or expand** short-term workforce credentials of one year or less
  - aligned with workforce gaps
  - in demand and high wage jobs
- **Improve** workforce equity in distressed communities.
- **Serve** African American population – at least 60%





# WEI Desired Outcomes

- **Accelerate the time to completion**
  - to enter and succeed in postsecondary education/training programs
- **Employment after completion**
  - paying at least 30% above the regional living wage or on a pathway to a family sustaining wage.
  - in high skilled, high wage, and in-demand occupations.



# Three-Year Success Outcomes for Illinois

- **The WEI Model** is proving to be a successful methodology for achieving outstanding enrollment, completion, and employment for African Americans and individuals of poverty.

| <b>Consortium Metrics<br/>18 Participating Colleges</b> | <b>FY20 Outcomes<br/>(at closeout)</b> | <b>FY21 Outcomes<br/>(at closeout)</b> | <b>FY22 In Progress<br/>(thru 3/31/23)</b> |
|---|--|--|--|
|   |  |  |  |
| <b>Enrolled Participants</b>                            | <b>3,209</b>                           | <b>3,323</b>                           | <b>3,126</b>                               |
| <b>Credentials</b>                                      | <b>2,526</b>                           | <b>3,613</b>                           | <b>2,851</b>                               |
| <b>60% African American Students</b>                    | <b>76%</b>                             | <b>71%</b>                             | <b>73%</b>                                 |
| <b>60% Completers</b>                                   | <b>60%</b>                             | <b>62%</b>                             | <b>64%</b>                                 |
| <b>60% Completers Employed</b>                          | <b>65%</b>                             | <b>70%</b>                             | <b>54%</b>                                 |
| <b>Average Hourly Wage</b>                              | <b>\$17.69</b>                         | <b>\$20.39</b>                         | <b>\$20.44</b>                             |
| <b>Average Cost Per Student</b>                         | <b>\$5,565</b>                         | <b>\$5,227</b>                         | <b>\$4,417</b>                             |

**WEI**

WORKFORCE  
EQUITY  
INITIATIVE

 **ICCB**

# Reflection Question

- WEI colleges offer a variety of critical support services (stipends, childcare, transportation, etc.). At your institution, what supportive services are in demand for students experiencing poverty?



# Supporting Continuous Improvement

Dawn Koeltzow, Project Director, Illinois Central College



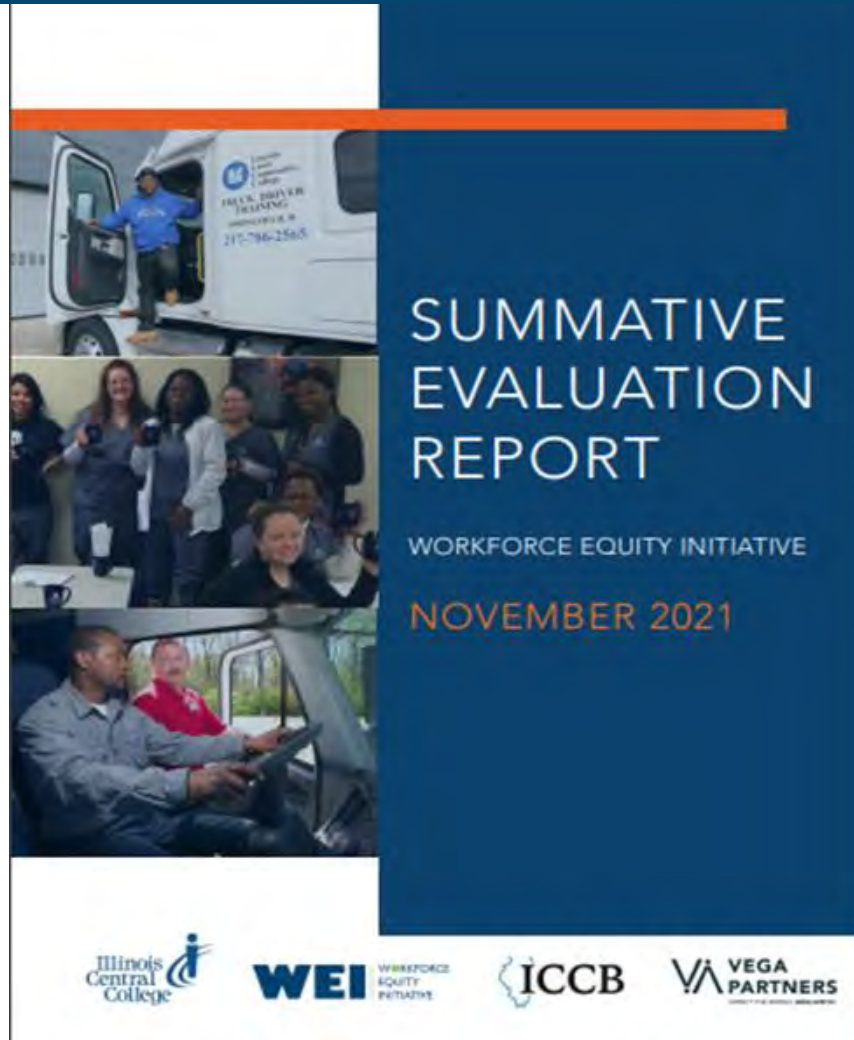


# Consortium Services



- Community of Practice
- Coaches
- Equity Trainings and Resources
- Quarterly Meetings and Symposium
- College Leadership Meetings
- Quarterly Summary Reports for Benchmarking
- Aggregate Data Based on Reports at Closeout
- Disaggregated Data Project

# Evaluation Reports



## WEI Colleges Performance Report FY21 Closeout

Presented to  
Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)  
and  
Illinois Central College, WEI Consortium Lead  
March 24, 2023



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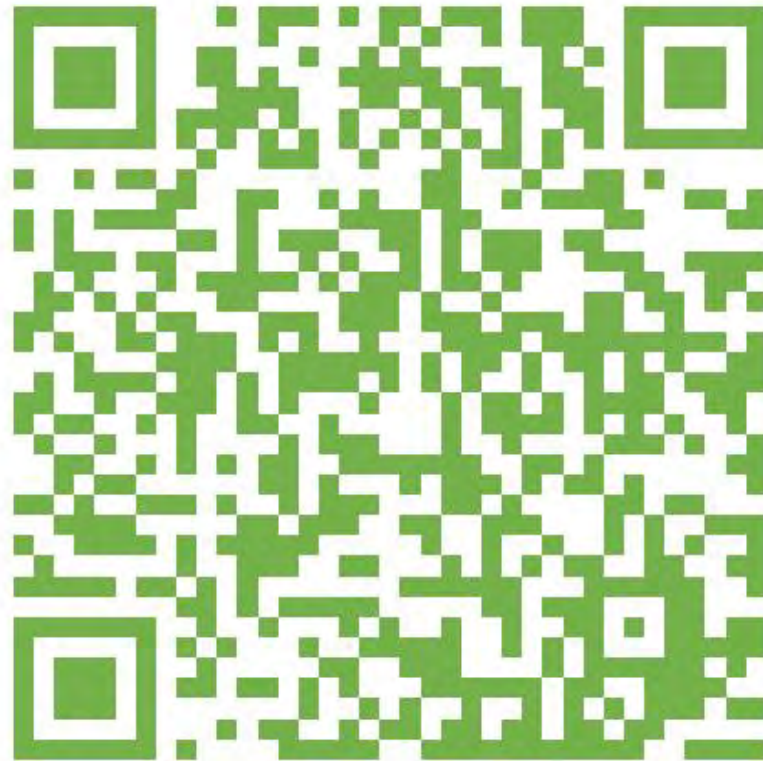
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WORKFORCE EQUITY INITIATIVE





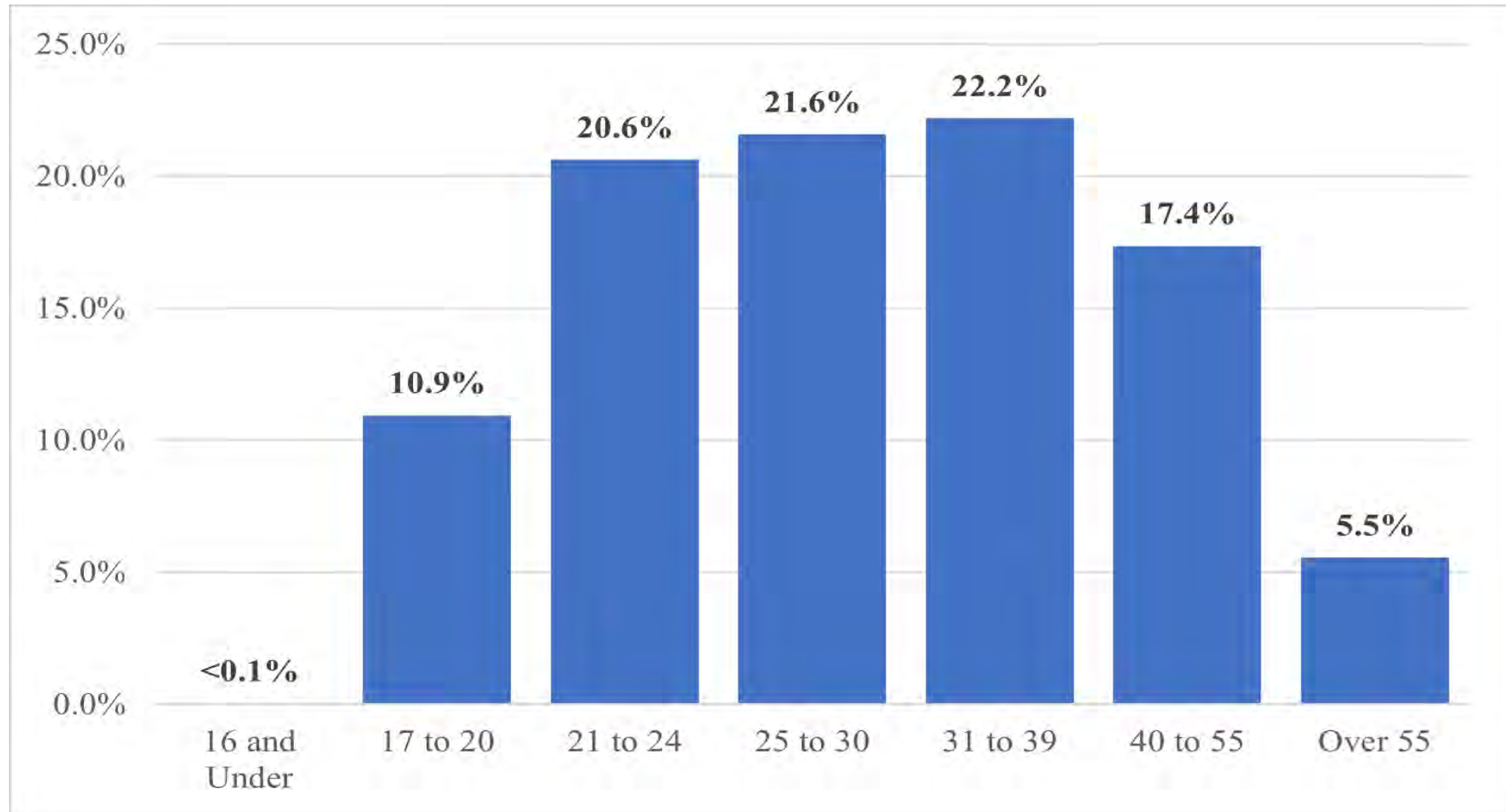
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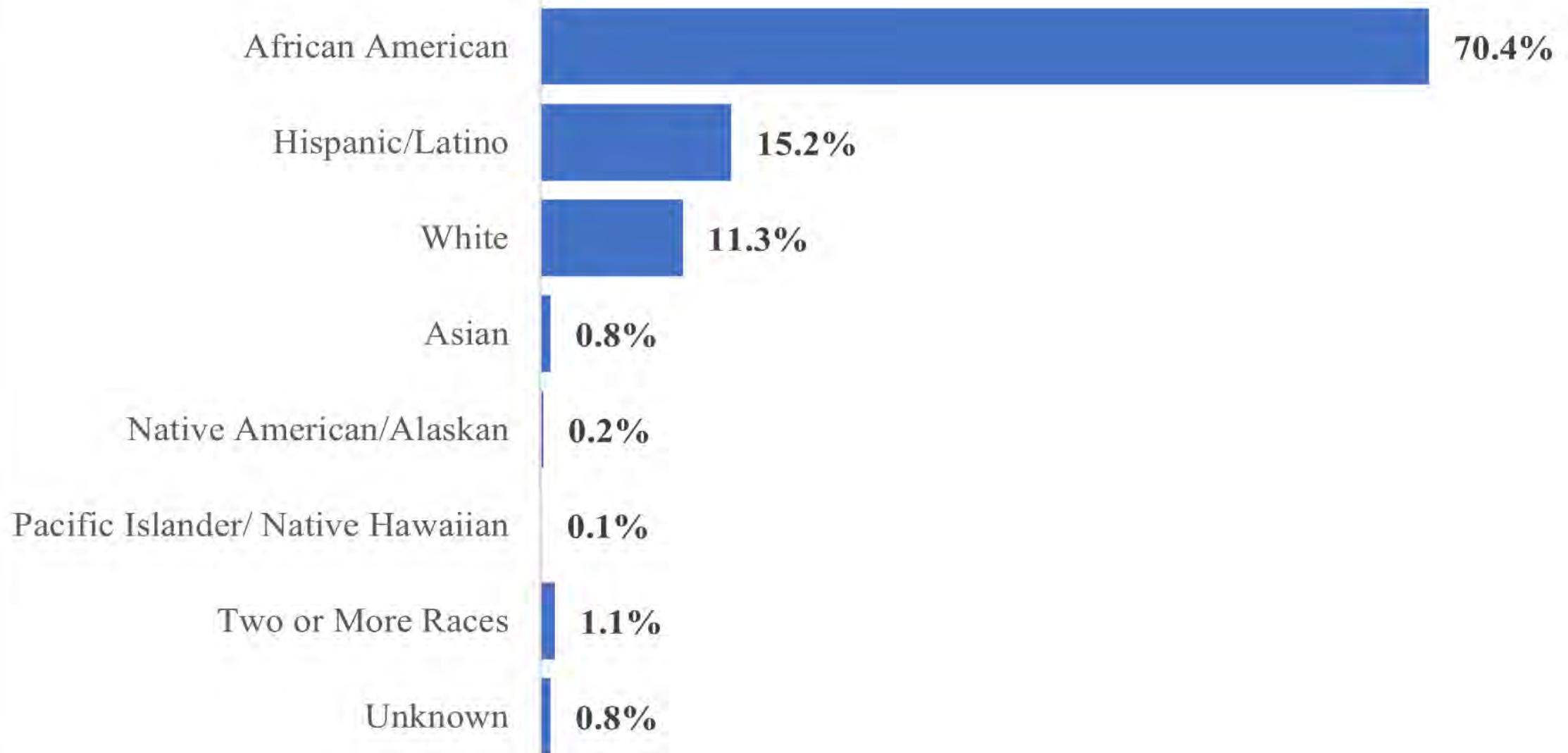
WORKFORCE EQUITY INITIATIVE  
**EVALUATION REPORT**



# WEI Demographics – by age

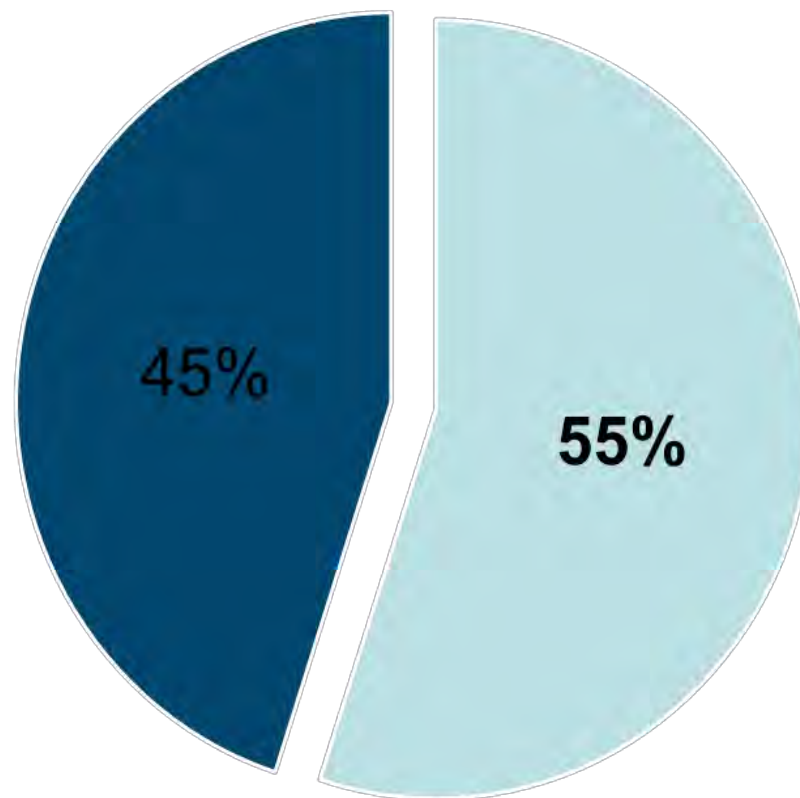


# WEI Demographics – by race/ethnicity



# WEI Demographics

**WEI Students - Female 55% and Male 45%**



■ Female ■ Male

# Enrollment by High Demand Field

*from last year's closeout report*

| High Demand Field     | Enrollment | African American Enrollment | Credentials Earned |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Healthcare            | 1570       | 1159                        | 1044               |
| Manufacturing         | 540        | 392                         | 1028               |
| Business / Services   | 451        | 256                         | 243                |
| Transportation        | 430        | 317                         | 428                |
| Construction          | 180        | 111                         | 251                |
| Computer Technology   | 164        | 111                         | 86                 |
| Repair / Installation | 63         | 25                          | 86                 |



# Highest Reported Hourly Wages

- **Truck Driving (CDL) – \$75**
- **Cannabis Dispensary – \$50**
- **Overhead Electrical Line – \$42**
- **Welding – \$39**
- **Nursing (LPN, CNA, BNA) – \$36**
- **Diesel Brake/Suspension – \$35**
- **Process Operator Tech – \$35**
- **Supply Chain – \$35**
- **Industrial Skills – \$34**
- **Medical Billing & Coding – \$30**
- **Automotive Tech – \$29**
- **Cybersecurity – \$29**
- **Emergency Medical (EMT) – \$29**
- **Office Assistant / Bookkeeper – \$29**
- **Manufacturing Skills – \$28**
- **HVAC – \$26**
- **Web Development – \$26**
- **EKG Tech – \$26**
- **Patient Care Tech – \$26**
- **Solar Panel Installation – \$25**

# Key Success Factors / Lessons Learned

- Involves college leadership
- Fosters equity-focused decision making at all levels
- Provides cultural competence training for staff/faculty
- Enhances student services (navigators, specialists)
- Builds capacity for training programs
- **Embeds comprehensive wraparound services**
- Includes referrals for additional community support
- Embraces innovative outreach & marketing
- Targets high demand workforce gap positions
- Eliminates barriers at the institutional level
- Develops employer partnerships
- Requires essential skills training



# Key Success Factors – Technical Partners





# Addressing the Equity Gap: Future Plans for Illinois Community Colleges

- ICCB Goals for FY24
  - Continued strengthening of employer connections.
  - Heightened focus on the most successful program areas connected to the living wage.
  - Opportunities for sites to engage directly with one another through communities of practice.
  - Expansion opportunities.





# Addressing the Equity Gap: Future Plans for Illinois Community Colleges

- Equity Planning
- The ICCB and IBHE are co-facilitators of an Equity Planning Advisory Committee.
  - *Provide recommendations to the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board on the elements, methods, practices, and strategies to be included in an Illinois Higher Education Equity Plan framework. The framework will be used by public higher education institutions to develop new and expand existing equity efforts and from the data, explore ways in which to close gaps that exist among underrepresented and minoritized groups within their respective institutions.*
- WEI as a Model for other Grants

# Reflection Questions

- At your organization, what are some of the most successful strategies that you have in place to address closing the equity gap?
- Which equity initiatives at your organization are causing the greatest impact / institutional change?



**If we all row in the same direction, we will not only change the trajectory of individual lives, but also that of their families, while growing the workforce, businesses and increasing economic vitality.**



# Contact Info

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*Thank You for Attending the Session!*

