

# ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

## A Case Study of Chicago Jobs Council's WIOA Engagement Activities

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NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION  
Every worker. Every industry. A strong economy.

## A CASE STUDY

As states near the final stages of WIOA planning, many in the field are asking what final steps they can take to impact their state plans. National Skills Coalition's (NSC) partners at [Chicago Jobs Council](#) (CJC) have organized activities that provide examples for other policy advocates and service providers.

Under WIOA, states must develop plans that describe the state's overall workforce strategy and how it will be implemented. These plans are due to the federal government on March 3, 2016. NSC has advocated for WIOA state plans to serve as playbooks for strategies that help workers and businesses succeed, and has called on states to develop processes to authentically engage a broad set of stakeholders in the plan's creation.

CJC is a coalition that works to ensure access to employment and career advancement opportunities for people living in poverty. They are brokering opportunities for service providers, advocates, philanthropy, and local public agencies to provide feedback on Illinois' state plan.

CJC kicked off its WIOA engagement activities early this year with participants of its [Workforce Development Working Group](#), which meets bi-monthly and brings together community-based providers and advocates to discuss policy and program issues affecting disadvantaged job seekers and working poor families. Over several months, CJC provided an overview of the new federal law; invited agency leaders to discuss the state's WIOA planning process; facilitated small group discussions on key issues, such as career pathways and performance measures; and organized a process for local stakeholders to review and comment on the federal government's proposed WIOA regulations. CJC has also developed a WIOA resource page on [WIRE](#), its online portal that centralizes timely data and information for workforce development stakeholders in Chicago and Illinois.

CJC is also providing an intermediary function for service providers around the [state workforce board's WIOA activities](#), in order to ensure that providers' perspectives are incorporated into the state's planning process. The Illinois Workforce Board established seven Task Advisory Groups to engage local stakeholders on WIOA-related actions in the areas of governance, policy, planning, operations, performance, technology, and youth. These groups are tasked with providing feedback to the Board's WIOA Implementation Task Force. CJC is serving on the Operations, Governance, and Policy Task Advisory Groups – representing the needs of organizations that provide services to disadvantaged job seekers

## NSC STATE PLANNING RESOURCES

- *Realizing Innovation and Opportunity in WIOA: A Playbook for Creating Effective State Plans* ([Report](#) and [Webinar](#))
- *Engagement Matters: A Case Study of New Jersey's WIOA Planning Process* ([Brief](#))
- *Getting Started: Planning for WIOA in Your State* ([Webinar](#))
- [Aligned by Design Series](#) (Briefs and Webinars):
  - WIOA & Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
  - WIOA & Adult Education (Title II)
  - WIOA & Perkins Career and Technical Education
  - WIOA & Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)

and working poor families. To ensure that their work on the Task Advisory Groups is informed by these providers, CJC has met with multiple organizations to discuss priorities, opportunities, and challenges associated with WIOA implementation.

Later this year, Illinois will host meetings across the state to align WIOA state and regional planning efforts. Illinois' [regional meetings](#) will identify topline goals to be considered at a January 2016 summit designed to inform the state plan. CJC plans to develop recommendations on WIOA implementation as a resource for community-based advocates and providers participating in these conversations. As the state moves from planning to implementation this coming spring, CJC plans to continue to provide a forum for the field to weigh in on WIOA issues in Illinois.

### TAKE ACTION TO IMPACT YOUR STATE'S WIOA PLAN

- Host meetings for local organizations to discuss WIOA state plans with leadership from state agencies
- Facilitate conversations on priorities, opportunities, and challenges under WIOA and communicate those findings to state agencies
- Share information on and participate in public engagement opportunities, such as webinars and public meetings, hosted by your state
- Review and comment on your state's draft WIOA plan

### About National Skills Coalition

National Skills Coalition is a non-partisan, broad-based coalition of employers, unions, education and training providers, and public officials working toward a vision of an America that grows its economy by investing in its people so that every worker and every industry has the skills to compete and prosper. We engage in organizing, advocacy, and communications to advance state and federal policies that support these goals — policies that are based on the on-the-ground expertise of our members.

National Skills Coalition was founded in 1998 as The Workforce Alliance in response to a series of federal policies that signaled the end of national investments in the skills of America's workers at a time when skill gaps were growing in key U.S. industries. Since then, we've demonstrated that investments in skills work. We've shown that diverse stakeholders can find agreement around specific reforms that will improve a variety of workforce education and training policies. And we have documented that the American public is strongly supportive of a deeper investment in the skills of America's workers. We continue to mobilize support for a new national skills agenda that cuts across public policies, and simultaneously serves a wide range of U.S. workers and industries.

National Skills Coalition is governed by a Board of Directors and advised by a national Leadership Council drawn from the ranks of business, labor, community colleges, community-based organizations, and the public workforce system.

More than 8,000 members, representing more than 3,000 organizations in all 50 states, comprise the broad-based membership of National Skills Coalition.

Learn more at [www.nationalskillscoalition.org](http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org).

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