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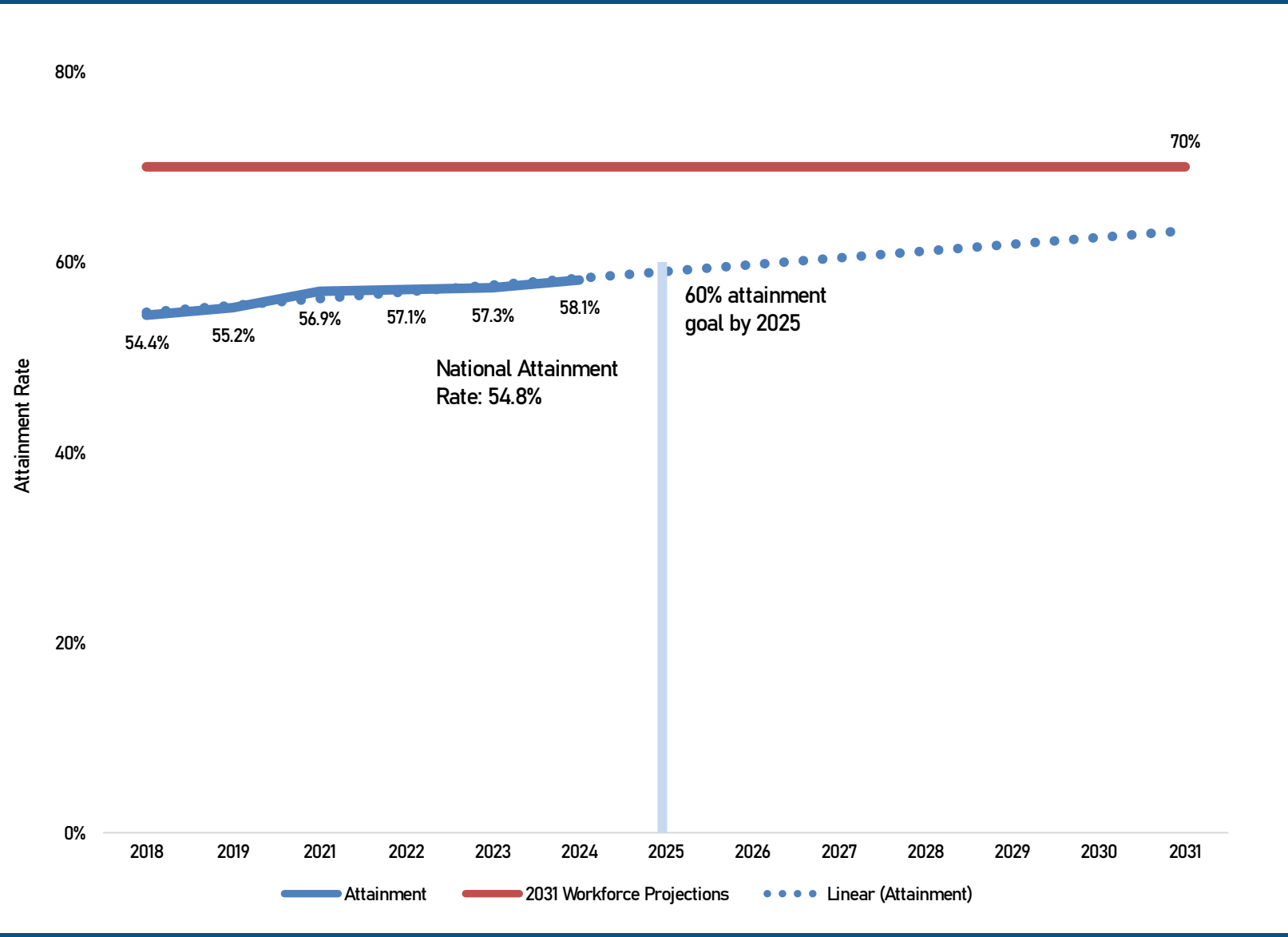
State Attainment Working Group Overview

IBHE Trustee Training
September 29, 2026



Despite Progress, The Work Continues

While Illinois made significant progress toward the 2025 attainment goal, **70%** of Illinois jobs will require some postsecondary training beyond high school by 2031. A gap between attainment and workforce needs will persist if Illinois stays on the same growth trajectory.

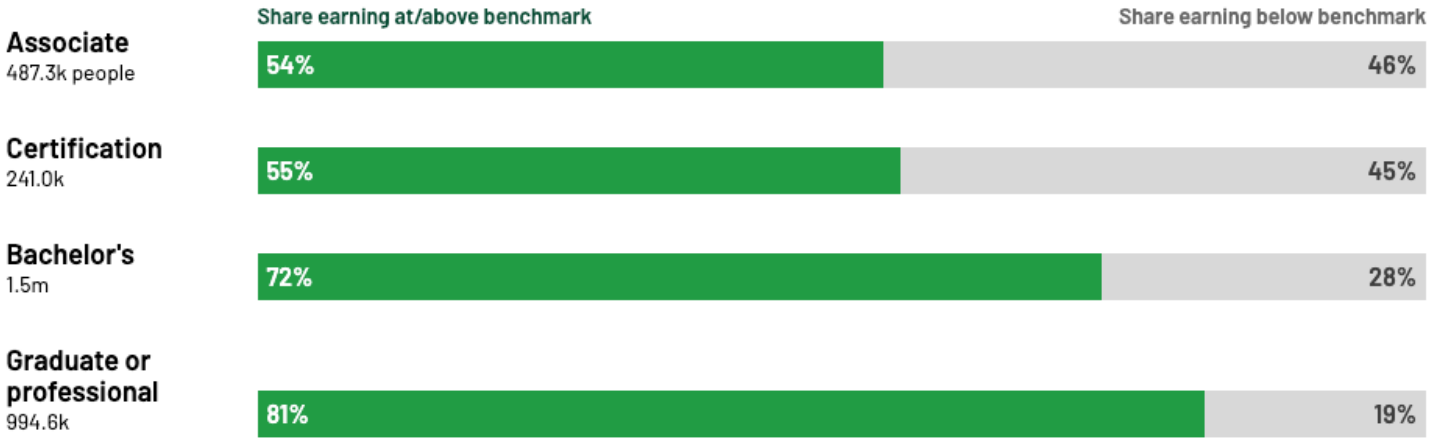


Not All Credentials Enable Economic Mobility

Just over half of adults in the IL labor force with an associates degree (54%) or post-high school certification (55%) are earning at least 15% more than the national median salary for high school graduates.

2024 Share of People Earning At or Above Benchmark in Illinois, within Credential Type

ages 25-64 among the labor force; benchmark reflects 15% more than the national median annual salary/wage of a high school graduate



Note: Certificate data unavailable. Demographic breakdowns are unavailable at the state level.

Cross-sector group tasked with recommending a value-centered state attainment goal that drives workforce alignment, economic mobility, and equity

Education and Workforce Members

- Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE)**
- Illinois Community College board (ICCB)**
- Illinois Dept. of Employment Security (IDES)**
- Illinois Dept. of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)**
- Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)
- Representatives of the IL Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB)

**Working group co-chairs

Advisory Members

- Illinois Dept. of Human Services (IDHS)
- Illinois Dept. of Corrections (IDOC)
- Illinois Dept. of Public Health (IDPH)
- Representative of the Office of the First Lady
- Other agencies as determined by the GO

HCM Strategists Serving as Facilitation Consultant

HCM STRATEGISTS

Illinois State Attainment Working Group

ATTAINMENT GOAL

A **North Star** that establishes a consistent vision on the horizon for the state.

CREDENTIALS OF VALUE COMPLETION GOAL

A goal to establish targets for institutions to drive change. Informed by a list that identifies high-priority credentials regionally and is updated regularly to account for evolving labor market needs.

REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Establish priorities and opportunities by region

LEARNER EXPERIENCE

Acknowledge variation in student experience and backgrounds, and design systems that meet the needs of modern learners.



A CLEAR VISION. CONNECTED ACTION.

Illinois's attainment goal guides all decisions and keeps us focused on the future.

Illinois focuses on credentials that lead to meaningful outcomes and update as needs evolve.

Illinois aligns strategies to regional strengths, needs, and opportunities.

Illinois designs flexible, equitable systems that meet learners where they are.

Setting the Vision

Our Process for Setting a New Attainment Goal for 2040

A data-informed, stakeholder-driven process to set a bold and achievable goal for 2040.

1 — Develop Workforce Projections



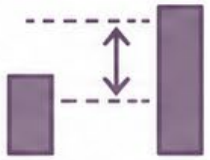
Project Illinois' future job openings and workforce needs by industry, region, and education level through 2040.

2 — Define Credentials of Value



Identify the postsecondary degrees and credentials that lead to economic mobility and meet workforce needs.

3 — Identify the Attainment Gap



Compare current attainment levels to future needs to quantify the gap we must close.

4 — Set the Attainment Goal



Establish a clear, bold, and measurable postsecondary attainment goal for Illinois in 2040.

5 — Finalize and Share the Goal



Finalize the goal through cross-agency alignment and share it widely to drive accountability and action.

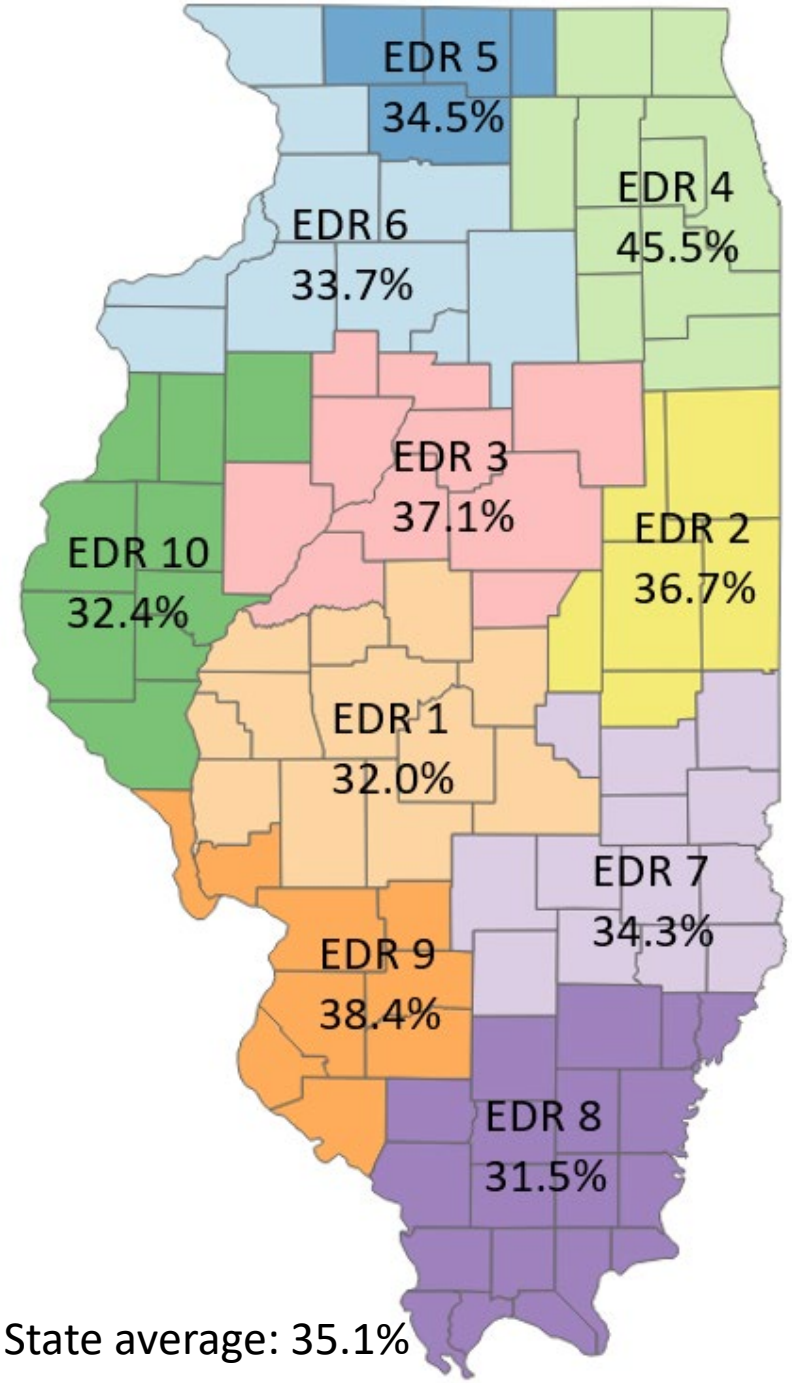
Stakeholder Engagement (Continuous)

Engage a broad range of stakeholders—students, educators, employers, community organizations, and state agency partners—throughout the process to ensure the goal is informed by diverse perspectives and grounded in Illinois communities.

Understanding Regional Priorities

Degree attainment varies by economic development region and county. To ensure the approach reflects regional priorities, the working group is leading a statewide listening tour.

- 10 stops across each economic development region Student survey and focus groups
- Sessions hosted by local colleges and universities
- Audience represents K-12, Higher Ed, Workforce Development, Employers, Community Organizations, Funders, Policymakers, and more



Degree Attainment: Percentage of residents (25 and over) with an Associate degree or higher

State average: 35.1%

State Examples of Credentials of Value

IWERC
Illinois Workforce & Education Research Collaborative

- ✓ Conducted national landscape analysis and literature of existing value definitions
- ✓ Identified key considerations and potential metrics aligned to Illinois programs and data



Wage Premium

Ex. Lumina's 15% wage premium threshold when compared to median earnings of individuals with only a HS diploma.



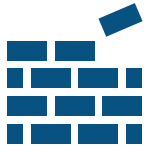
Community Needs

Ex. While Minnesota's credentials of value definition includes leading to family sustaining wages, there is an alternative to qualify if the credential meets essential community needs.



Occupation Alignment

Ex. Louisiana required credentials of value to align with a 3-, 4-, or 5-star job occupation rating defined by the Workforce Commission.



Stackable

Ex. Florida requires credentials of value to stack toward other credentials.

Do not edit
How to change the design

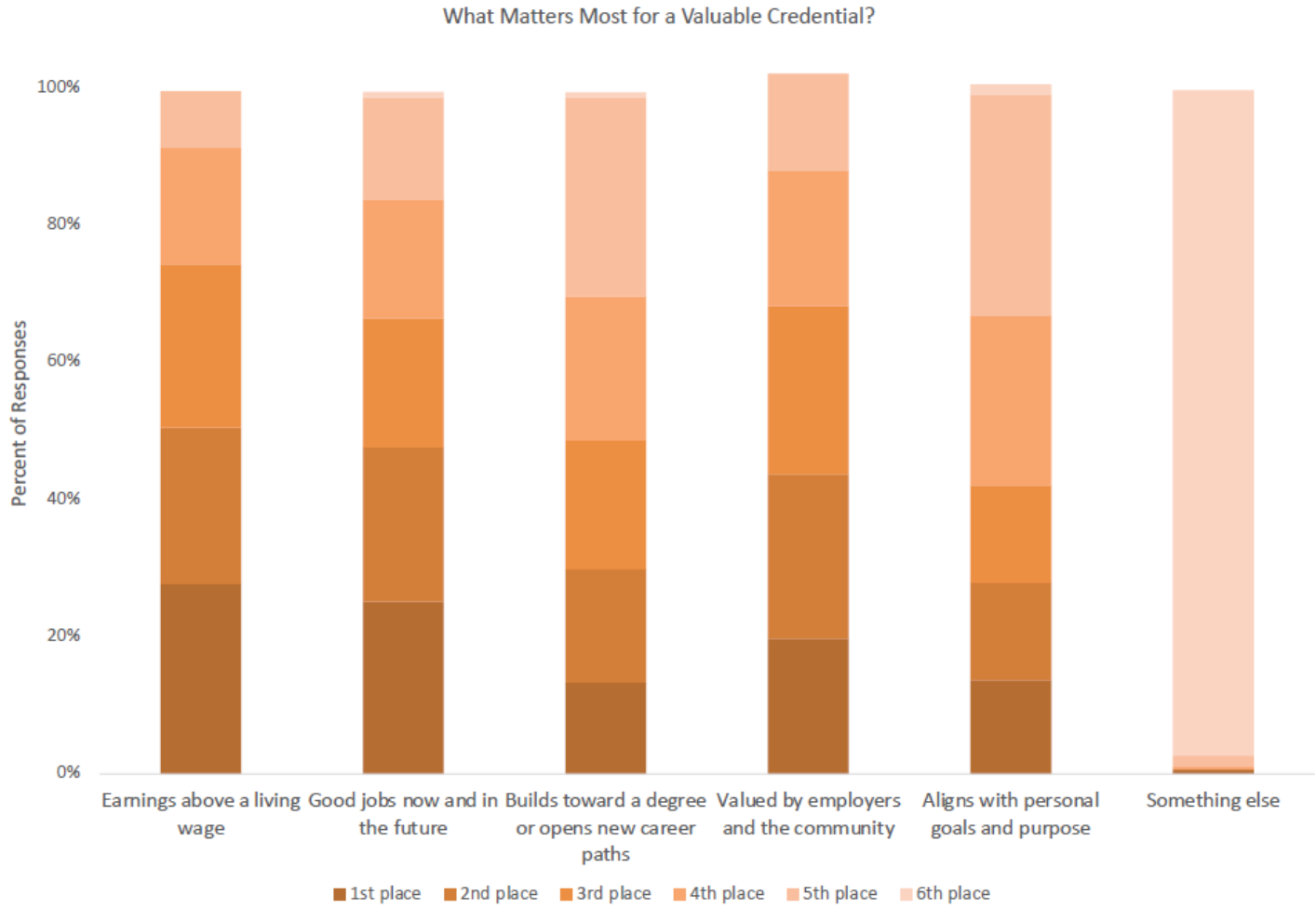


What matters most to you when thinking about a valuable credential?

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Earnings and employment outcomes are the strongest factors shaping how respondents value a credential.



Question: What matters most to you when thinking about a valuable credential?

Regional Session Poll Results

- **Multiple Measures**: Include multiple measures in any definition for “value” that balances the needs of employers (e.g. demand) and individuals (e.g. sustainable wages). Other important elements of value include stackability and portability/flexibility.
- **Societal Value**: Identify pathways for credentials that do not hit a wage threshold but have significant societal value, such as early childhood education.
- **Regional Approach**: Keep regional need central to the work and ensure every region sees relevance to a definition.
- **Flexibility**: Ensure a list of credentials of value is flexible and can adapt over time to account for evolving workforce needs.
- **Language**: Be cautious of the term “value”, which creates a binary between what is of ”value” or not.
- **Liberal Arts**: Ensure a definition does not unintentionally exclude the liberal arts and only address workforce training.

Stakeholder Engagement Themes



Next Steps

Sept. & Oct.

- Synthesis of Feedback
- Develop and Model a Value Definition

November

- Prepare Recommendations

December

- Submit recommendations to Governor

Jan./Feb.

- Announce new statewide attainment goal & strategies