

Future of Work Task Force

Meeting 4 Minutes

December 20, 2021

- I. Call to Order
Meeting is called to order at 9:03 am by Senator Ram Villivalam.

- II. Welcoming remarks from task force co-chair Senator Ram Villivalam. He recognized new task force members Brad Tietz and David Tovar and noted that we anticipate some additional new members for the January meeting. Also expect to meet with members individually to seek input as we approach the midway point of the task force.

- III. Roll Call
Senator Villivalam requests to call the roll. The following task force members were present:
 - Senator Ram Villivalam
 - Senator Don DeWitte
 - Representative Ryan Spain
 - Erica Bland
 - Dalene Bramer
 - Stephen Campbell
 - Michael Ciaccio
 - Colleen Daley
 - Magda Derisma
 - Tyler Diers
 - Sarah Hartwick
 - Clark Kaericher
 - Andrea Kluger
 - Ai-Jen Poo
 - Juan Salgado
 - Sean Stott
 - Brad Tietz
 - David Tovar
 - Will Gomberg, on behalf of Director Kristin Richards
 - Brian Durham
 - Ginger Ostro
 - Anna Koeppel
 - Marci Johnson

- IV. Approval of minutes from November 30 meeting
Mike Ciaccio moves to approve the minutes. Seconded by Senator DeWitte.

- V. Approval of Agenda
Sean Stott moves to approve the agenda. Seconded by Erica Bland.

VI. Senator Villivalam introduced Kat Schaeffer of the Inclusive Economy Lab at the University of Chicago to provide an update on the task force report. Ms. Schaeffer stated they are working on an outline for the report that follows topics covered in meetings, and that outline would be shared with solicitation of feedback by January meeting. Members will receive a Google survey asking about how they would like to be involved in preparing the report. In the meantime, members could support their work by providing: (1) policy success stories on relevant subjects; (2) an example individual, organization, or community that could be used in a feature story; and (3) statements of support for specific policies identified by the task force.

VII. Senator Villivalam introduced the first presenter, Matthew Muench of P33.

- Future of Work is being shaped by three forces:
 - Labor market polarization – Growth in high-wage and low-wage jobs, less so in middle-wage jobs; this was exaggerated during recovery from COVID
 - Skills shift – from manual and repetitive tasks, toward tasks requiring higher cognitive, social, and technical skills. This is largely due to a shift to digitization and requirements in ability to use technology.
 - Remote and contingent work
- We know the specific skills companies are looking for and that they prefer students to have done a specific project before hiring them. But K-12 and higher ed are not providing those skills and experiences to a broad enough population, and that particularly applies to minority populations.
- While there are pathways beyond K-12, Illinois is not using those pathways sufficiently in the tech space, including apprenticeships, boot camps, and through workforce development programs.

VIII. Senator Villivalam introduced the second presenter, Jon Furr of Northern Illinois University

- Young people benefit when lines are blurred between secondary, higher ed, and career so there are fewer places for young people to drop out or lose track as they find their career.
- Identified three drivers to improve talent and make opportunities more equitable:
 - Attainment among Black and Latinx populations, in particular. P20 Council is currently working on strategies for this.
 - College and career pathways that support students from secondary through post-secondary to credential, and then into a career. A career pathways guide gives instructors, administrators, and students the information they need about what skills are necessary to be prepared for good jobs in a range of industries.
 - System alignment, so that transitions from one sector to the next within the education system are seamless.

Task force members had a brief discussion following these two presentations. Juan Salgado discussed how community colleges were an innovator in career pathways and are beginning to work more closely with high schools to develop pathways with seamless transitions. Mr. Salgado asked Mr. Muench how they can get more interest from companies to partner on programming. Mr. Muench agreed companies have a bigger role to play both in supporting

educators in identifying what is needed, and providing work-based learning, and P33 is working to support companies' involvement in that process. Marci Johnson noted that rural areas in particular are struggling to identify opportunities for work-based learning, and those opportunities need to be available at the secondary level in those locations. Jon Furr noted virtual opportunities can bridge the gap if done at scale, and public sector can also provide more work-based learning opportunities. Erica Bland raised the need to focus on what we're doing to specifically target places where inequities are largest, how are we bringing companies into that process, and what are we doing for unemployed or underskilled adults.

- IX. Senator Villivalam introduced the third presenter, Bronagh Friel of Google.
- Google has been developing features that make it easier for people to find specific opportunities relevant to their skills.
 - Google Career Certificates are online training courses available for a set of high-demand jobs, and certificates can be earned in 3 to 6 months part-time. Over half of the graduates do not have a 4-year degree. They partner with over 150 employers to place graduates.
 - Google has partnered with community colleges and universities in Illinois to provide training and specialized certificates, as well as with career and technical high schools in Illinois.
- X. Senator Villivalam introduced the fourth presenter, Sarah Hartwick of the Illinois Manufacturers Association
- IMA Education Foundation embarked on an Education & Workforce Policy Tour at 10 stops over 6 weeks to have IMA-member-led discussions with education professionals and business organizations to provide more support for employees and employers in manufacturing.
 - Some examples of issues that have come up and places where members are doing creative things to address them:
 - The skills gap is in part driven by a lack of essential skills for some applicants, and manufacturers are starting to address that by partnering with local high schools and community colleges about how to increase those skills.
 - Misconception that manufacturing is dirty and dangerous work that is not well-paid. There is a need to dispel this myth by raising awareness about how well-paid these jobs are, and that manufacturing in Illinois is high-tech and clean.
 - Companies are revisiting job requirements to make sure they're not unnecessarily excluding talent, and changing onboarding to raise company appeal and information that potential employees have about the company.
 - Improving workplace culture for retention by providing more flexibility, opportunities for meaningful employee feedback, and opportunities for upskilling and advancement.
 - IMA proposed a range of policies the state could pursue, including financial incentives for workers entering manufacturing, job training grants, and a state campaign to promote entry into the manufacturing workforce mentioned in the state 5-year plan.

XI. Ameya Pawar introduced the final presenter, Deputy Governor Andy Manar, and moderated a discussion with the Deputy Governor on the Future of Work.

- Deputy Governor Manar began by providing an update on the work being carried out by the Governor's Equity and Access Workforce Commission.
 - The commission was formed to create an accessible and equitable state workforce system grounded in the experience of various users of that system.
 - There are two working groups – user and stakeholder working group, and funding and infrastructure working group.
 - The Commission is undertaking a human-centered design process to identify challenges individuals face in accessing the system and to improve their experience in benefitting from the system.
 - The Commission started in September and hopes to have a report published in June, with monthly meetings. Deputy Governor Manar proposed having someone from the Future of Work task force provide testimony to better align the two groups.
- Mr. Pawar asked about what has led to many downstate manufacturers leaving the state, and what happens to the towns left behind. Deputy Governor Manar in response focused on opportunity to bring new opportunities to downstate communities that have lost jobs due to global economic factors. He is optimistic due to the need for logistics and changes to manufacturing trends. Attracting more employers could go a long way to increase buying power, homeownership, reduce vacancies, and help those communities recover.
- Mr. Pawar asked how do we get a lot more manufacturing success stories like Rivian in Illinois. Deputy Governor Manar said the most important factors are location of Illinois in the country, as well as having infrastructure, sites, and workforce that are attractive to manufacturers. We need to be able to have an answer for any company asking about how to fill their jobs with talented individuals in Illinois.
- Mr. Pawar asked about how the state was investing in transportation infrastructure and a more resilient supply chain. Deputy Governor Manar noted IDOT goes through robust process to ensure infrastructure is tied to economic development and opportunity. The REV Act directly linked placement of manufacturing sites to infrastructure development. The Governor is announcing major investments in our ports.
- Mr. Pawar asked about how the task force can inform improvements to equity and access to opportunities. Deputy Governor Manar notes that the commission has been focused on proposals to change policy. This could come in the form of administrative functions changing or in the form of legislation.
- Mr. Pawar asked about how the latest clean energy package would affect opportunities for jobs. Deputy Governor Manar noted that the package showed that we can do things that are good for the environment and good for jobs and wages. We will see economic growth driven by the REV Act and CEJA for years to come.

The task force asked some questions following the moderated discussion with Mr. Pawar.

Senator Dewitte asked about some examples of legislative fixes from the commission.

Deputy Governor Manar said one may be regarding changes to the alignment of funding

streams among different state agencies. Ai-Jen Poo asked for Deputy Governor Manar to discuss which sectors provide opportunities for the goals of equity and access. Deputy Governor Manar highlighted opportunities to grow the economy because of our state's central location and the change in demand for shipment of goods in the pandemic. We can capitalize on growing those jobs, particularly in parts of the state that have experienced lagging job growth over the past few decades. Senator Villivalam asked how, in the wake of the REV Act, we ensure small and medium-size businesses benefit from economic development initiatives, and how we address geographic inequities for areas that are losing employers. Deputy Governor Manar highlighted that we are paying a lot of attention to the EV supply chain and they will benefit as well from the REV Act. Regarding second question, Deputy Governor Manar noted barriers in rural areas are becoming increasingly profound, and community colleges will be crucial to providing skills they want and need to thrive in their area.

XII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

XIII. Senator DeWitte moved to adjourn, and Stott seconded. Meeting adjourned at 11:29 am.