Acknowledgements

The Will County State of Youth Report owes its continued success to many stakeholders, including the Youth Council of the Workforce Investment Board of Will County, local educators, youth service providers, and many others who provide support to the report. We would also like to thank those who have participated in the annual Will County Youth Provider Summits and are the backbone of our County's youth provider system.

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The Purpose of this Report

Many studies have been done on youth and youth behaviors. The Workforce Investment Board of Will County recognizes that when examining local workforce issues youth specific information must be taken into consideration. Youth need to be ready, willing and able to become part of the workforce, willing to do what is needed and have the necessary skills and abilities to be successful in the workforce.

The Workforce Investment Board has previously released State of the Workforce Reports for Will County that explores in greater detail the industry sectors, critical occupations, and skills and knowledge that are driving the local workforce economy. The Board re-evaluates its targeted economic development activities on an ongoing basis. This information will help youth systems develop appropriate short and long-term strategies.

Numbers alone don't tell the full story. Language and cultural barriers, poverty status, and academic challenges affect many youth. There may be populations of youth that are small as a percentage of the whole, but are large numerically. More importantly, we don't know whether youth of all socio-economic and ability levels are being prepared with the skills and knowledge they need to transition to responsible adulthood and to be successful in the industries and occupations that comprise Will County's growing economy.

The purpose of this report is to inform and assist employers, youth providers, educators, government, parents, and others to better understand Will County youth, plan for providing services to youth, and ensure that the youth of Will County have productive futures and long-term economic self-sufficiency.

Background

In 2002, the Youth Council of the Workforce Investment Board of Will County committed to a process to understand youth in Will County. For the purpose of this report, "Youth" is flexibly defined as an individual under age 21 who does not yet possess the skills needed to assume an adult role in the work community.

With this understanding, the Youth Council of the Workforce Investment Board of Will County defined a vision for youth development and success that remains unchanged:

"The Mission of the Youth Council of Will County is to develop partnerships to coordinate and promote programs for youth. These programs will provide the necessary knowledge, skills, attitude, and experiences, to enable a smooth transition into a changing world through life-long learning experiences leading to future successful careers and long-term economic self-sufficiency."

This mission contains two elements:

- The youth development system is about all youth, not just those with barriers. The system should be thought of very broadly. It includes employer, P-20 education, community-based organizations, youth service organizations, faith-based entities, and public and private training institutions.

- The purpose of youth development is to enable youth to become well-adjusted adults with the skills needed to be productive in skilled careers. Youth development is not just a social issue. It is also a critical economic issue, both for the individual youth as well as for the Will County economy.

The Workforce Investment Board of Will County in partnership with The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago, including Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kendall, Lake, Livingston, Kankakee, McHenry and Will, contracted with Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago to develop a multi-faceted strategic plan to comprehensively report the status of youth in the Chicago Metro region as well as Will County, taking a look at a wide range of societal aspects that affect our youth. In order to collect the information necessary to compile the initial report, three activities were identified.

Chicago Metropolitan Region Youth Resource Mapping Project

- Hosted a Forum in 2002 where educators, youth providers and business leaders focused on strategies for preparing youth for current and future workforce needs, career awareness, integrating career development into subject areas and development of soft skills and integration of work ethics, leadership, and diversity into teaching.

- Conducted a regional survey of youth service providers to learn about youth services, identify potential partners, refer youth to agencies for additional services and gain a deeper understanding of available youth services to support future planning.

Customization of Data Collection to Address Needs Specific to Will County Youth

- A local Steering Committee was convened to develop the database of Will County agencies, providers and youth focused organizations and to review the survey instrument and information collection to ensure an appropriate and functional snapshot of youth data specific to Will County needs.

- The completed project included a web-based directory of youth services and organizations with links to area providers and resource agencies and a written report that includes a summary of the survey results.

Focus Groups of Community Leaders and Youth

- Focus groups were conducted to gain feedback from adults and youth about the most important issues facing youth in Will County, to compare the issues selected by the adult focus groups with the issues selected by the youth focus groups, and compare the results of the focus groups to the gap analysis from the survey results collected by Chapin Hall.

- Will County hosted the first Youth Provider Summit in May 2003 to introduce the Youth Resource Mapping project and gather information on what area experts perceived the greatest needs of Will County youth were.

- In 2010, youth and adult focus groups were again convened that reaffirmed and updated the initial priority issues identified in 2003. Based on these results the adults/professionals and the youth are in agreement with many of the major issues. All issues listed by either group describe a perceived critical youth issue in Will County. This information should give the citizens of Will County a good overview of youth needs. The complete list of youth issues is included in Appendix A.

Will County State of Youth Report

As a final component, the State of Youth report was developed to analyze secondary data that would assist this report in describing the state of youth in Will County. Information relating to youth includes: economics, education, age, race, household status, employment, substance abuse, mental and physical health, criminal activity, disabilities, and language differences.

This is the fifth update of the Will County State of Youth Report. This update of the report seeks not only to update the information in the original report but to add additional information now available related to the priority issues identified.

Youth Demographics: Who are they?

Will County is becoming increasingly more diverse, with youth facing a variety of barriers including having difficulty communicating in English, having disabilities, living in poverty, substance abuse as examples.

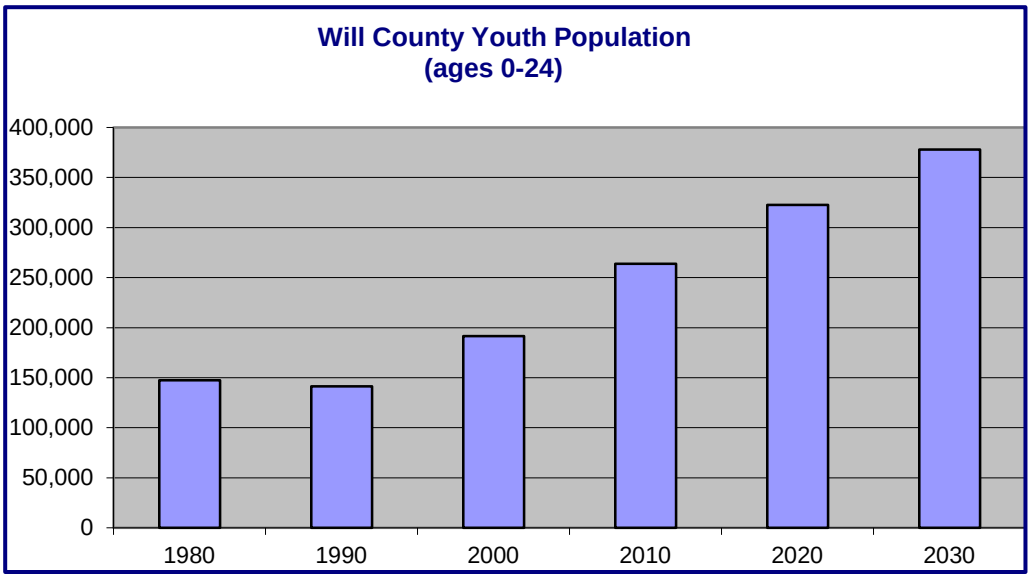
How many youth do we have?

In 2000 there were 191,556 youth 0-24 years of age in Will County. By 2010 that number had increased to 263,800, which represents a 56% increase. It is projected that by 2030, Will County could have nearly 380,000 youth ages 0-24. These Increasing numbers are already taxing our schools and youth providers, particularly given the challenges some youth have.

Total Youth Population: Past, Present and Future
Will County

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Under 5 Years	29,026	29,446	42,102	51,813	68,455	79,054
5-9 Years	29,556	30,488	44,269	56,697	67,660	82,871
10-14 Years	30,137	29,775	41,429	57,670	66,496	81,236
15-19 Years	30,381	27,794	36,337	53,524	64,567	73,365
20-24 Years	28,267	24,741	27,762	44,095	55,356	61,460
TOTAL	147,367	142,204	191,899	263,799	322,534	377,986

Source: U.S Census 1980, 1990; American Community Survey 2000, 2012
Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Population Projections



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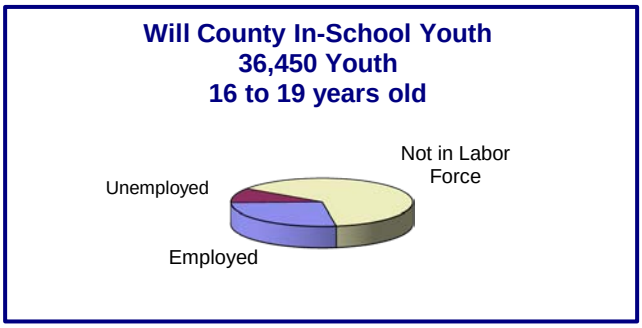
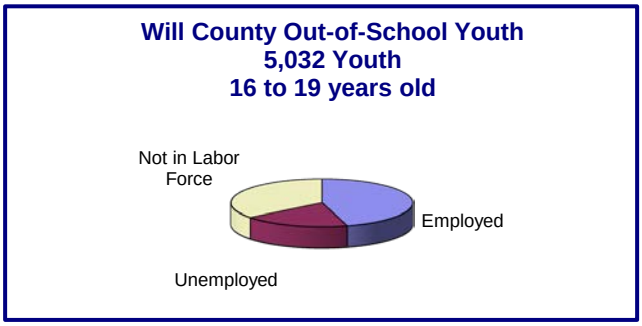




It is a concern that 26% of the youth who are "not in-school" are also not in the labor force, or "disconnected". Reasons for this "disconnection" could include parenting, disability, incarceration, or simply a detachment from the world of work. The connection and preparation of these youth for work is critical in order to ensure future employment success and the continued economic vitality of Will County.

In previous State of the Youth Reports, excerpts from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 have been included. On March 26, 2014, the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Statistics, released an update from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997. *America's Youth at 21: School Enrollment, Training, and Employment Transitions Between Ages 20 and 21*[19] provides highlights from this national survey of about 9,000 young men and women who were born during the years 1980 to 1984. These respondents were ages 12 to 17 when first interviewed in 1997 and ages 26-32 when interviewed for the 15th time in 2011-2012.

Highlights from this report include:

- By age 27, 32 % of woman had received a bachelor's degree, compared with 24% of men. Nine (9%) percent of men were high school dropouts compared to eight (8%) percent of women.
- Individuals born from 1980 to 1984 held an average of 6.2 jobs from ages 18 to 26. The number of jobs held varies by education for women but not for men.
- High school graduates who had never enrolled in college were employed an average of 68% of the weeks from ages 18 to 22, and 74% of weeks from ages 23 to 26. In comparison, those who had dropped out of high school were employed 51% of weeks from ages 18 to 22, and 57% of weeks from ages 23 to 26.
- Over two-third of the jobs held by high school dropouts from age 18 to 26 were held less than a year and 10% were held two (2) years or more. For those with a bachelor's degree or more, approximately 50% of jobs were held less than a year and 14% held two (2) years or more.

[19] America's Young Adults at 27: Labor Market Activity, Education, and Household Composition: Results from a longitudinal Survey, U.S. Department of Labor 14-1491, March 26, 2014.

The U.S. Department of Labor recently released the *Employment and Unemployment Among Youth—Summer 2014*[20]. The National youth unemployment rate in July 2010 was 19.1%. It has been steadily decreasing to 14.3% in July 2014.

United States
Summer Employment Status of Youth Ages 16 – 24
Data not seasonally adjusted

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Youth 16-24	37,586,000	37,944,000	38,196,000	38,799,000	38,861,000	38,735,000
Labor Force	23,691,000	22,938,000	22,742,000	23,472,000	23,506,000	23,437,000
-Youth Employed	19,304,000	18,564,000	18,632,000	19,461,000	19,684,000	20,085,000
-Youth Unemployed	4,387,000	4,374,000	4,110,000	4,011,000	3,821,000	3,353,000
Unemployment Rate	18.5	19.1	18.1	17.1	16.3	14.3
Not in Labor Force	13,895,000	15,006,000	15,454,000	15,327,000	15,355,000	15,298,000

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014

Below are similar comparisons in relation to Illinois youth based on annual averages, not just summer employment as depicted in the table above.

Illinois
Annual Employment Status of Youth Ages 16 – 24
Data not seasonally adjusted

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Youth 16-24	1,684,000	1,684,000	1,669,000	1,597,000	1,614,000	N/A
Labor Force	946,000	929,000	929,000	913,000	901,000	N/A
-Youth Employed	765,000	769,000	773,000	744,000	726,000	N/A
-Youth Unemployed	181,000	160,000	156,000	168,000	175,000	N/A
Unemployment Rate	21.0	20.4	19.3	21.0	22.0	N/A
Not in Labor Force	738,000	755,000	740,000	684,000	713,000	N/A

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security – Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) 2013

In July 2014, 25% of employed youth worked in the leisure and hospitality industry (which includes food services), and 19% worked in the retail trade industry. These two industries typically account for large shares of summer youth employment.

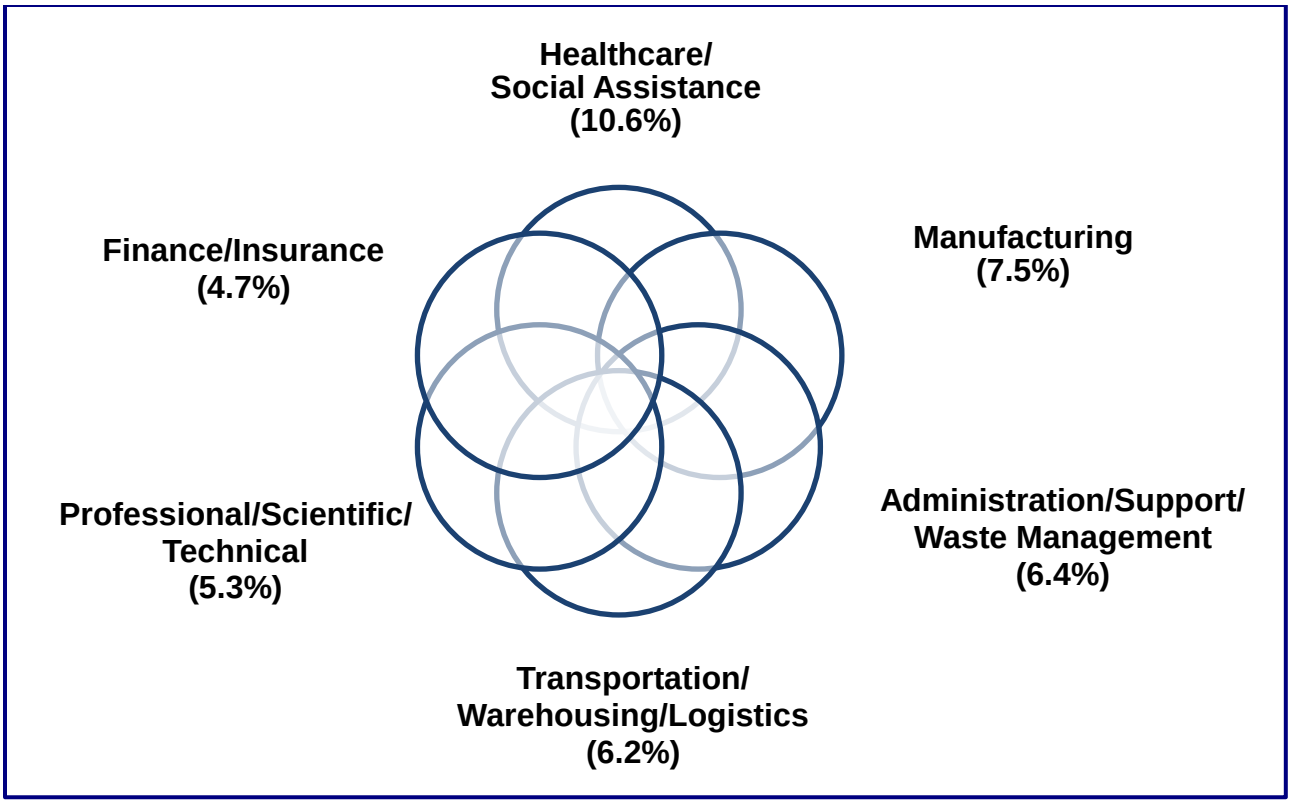
[20] Employment and Unemployment Among Youth—Summer 2014. U.S. Department of Labor 14-1498, August 2014.

What kinds of employment opportunities await youth in Will County?

The Will County economy is driven by six (6) key industry sectors:

- Healthcare/Social Assistance
- Manufacturing
- Administrative/Support/Waste Mgmt.
- Transportation/Warehousing/Logistics
- Professional Scientific/Technical
- Finance and Insurance

Percent of Total Employment in Six Key Sectors



EMSI 2014.2 – QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, Self-Employed, and Extended Proprietors

TOP OCCUPATIONS: Occupations in terms of employment demand are noted for each of those sectors. It is interesting to note that many of these occupations in each provide a range of opportunities for youth from high school graduate to college degree.

Occupation	Median Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education/Training
Healthcare		
Registered Nurse	$31.64	Associate's degree
Home Health Aide	$10.65	Less than high school w/short-term training
Personal Care Aide	$9.95	Less than high school w/short-term training
Nursing Assistant	$10.59	Postsecondary certification
Physical Therapist	$32.95	Doctoral/professional degree
EMT/Paramedic	$24.15	Postsecondary certification
Medical Assistant	$15.10	Postsecondary certification
Licensed Practical Nurse	$20.80	Postsecondary certification
Receptionist/Information Clerk	$11.87	High school diploma/GED w/short-term training
Dental Assistant	$15.79	Postsecondary certification
Physician/Surgeon	$73.27	Doctoral/professional degree
Medical Secretary	$15.14	High school diploma/GED w/mod-term training
Manufacturing		
Packaging/Filling Mach Operator	$13.18	High school diploma/GED w/mod-term training
Machinist	$21.27	High school diploma/GED w/long-term training
Production Supervisor	$30.00	Postsecondary certification
Mixing/Blending Machine Setter	$18.30	High school diploma/GED w/mod-term training
Sales Rep	$25.26	High school diploma/GED w/mod-term training
Inspector/Tester	$16.37	High school diploma/GED w/mod-term training
Industrial Machinery Mechanic	$27.88	High school diploma/GED w/long-term training
Food Batchmaker	$14.10	High school diploma/GED w/mod-term training
Team Assembler	$13.24	High school diploma/GED w/mod-term training
Hand Packer	$9.85	Less than high school w/short-term training
General/Operations Manager	$40.01	Bachelor's degree
Manager	$23.11	High school diploma/GED
Administrative/Support/Waste Management		
Freight & Stock Mover	$11.16	Less than high school w/short-term training
Landscaper/Groundskeeper	$10.62	Less than high school w/short-term training
Janitor	$11.66	Less than high school w/short-term training
Office Clerk	$13.35	High school diploma/GED w/short-term training
Customer Service Rep	$15.38	High school diploma/GED w/short-term training
Production Worker Helper	$12.10	Less than high school w/short-term training
Maid	$9.06	Less than high school w/short-term training
Production Worker	$12.66	High school diploma/GED w/mod-term training
Secretary/Administrative Assistant	$14.63	High school diploma/GED w/short-term training
General/Operations Manager	$40.01	Bachelor's degree
Packaging/Filling Mach Operator	$13.18	High school diploma/GED w/mod-term training
Human Resources Specialist	$25.33	Bachelor's degree
Sales Rep	$23.01	High school diploma/GED w/short-term training
Manager	$23.11	High school diploma/GED

EMSI 2014.2 – QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, Self-Employed, and Extended Proprietors