



# BRIDGE PROGRAMS IN ILLINOIS: RESULTS OF THE 2010 ILLINOIS BRIDGE STATUS SURVEY

A Report from  
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH AND LEADERSHIP  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

This report provides a summary of major results of the Illinois Bridge Status Survey, administered online between April and June 2010. The purpose of the survey was to understand the extent to which bridge programs are being implemented in Illinois, as well as to build an online directory of bridge programs.

Bridge programs are an emerging educational concept in Illinois that are intended to help low-skilled adults transition to postsecondary education and employment. The state recently adopted a formal definition of bridge instruction as a result of Illinois' participation in the Shifting Gears Initiative. According to this definition,

Bridge programs prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in credit-bearing postsecondary education and training leading to career-path employment in high-demand, middle- and high-skilled occupations. The goal of bridge programs is to sequentially bridge the gap between the initial skills of individuals and what they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and career-path employment (Illinois Community College Board, 2009).

The adoption of the bridge definition is one of many ongoing policy-related activities associated with Shifting Gears and is intended to encourage local entities to develop and implement bridge programs that can take a variety of forms, including bridges that are associated with adult education, developmental education, and career and technical education (CTE).

### SELECTED FINDINGS

#### Bridge Program Characteristics

Thirty (30) existing bridge programs and 33 bridge programs under development were identified in the survey. The findings in this report are applicable to the 30 existing programs only. Twenty-six (26, or 87%) of the 30 programs are offered currently and four (or 13%) were offered within the past year but are not currently offered. These 30 bridge programs were reported by 23 different organizations and include programs offered by adult education departments and programs, CTE, and workforce development, as well as via partnerships comprising these entities.

The majority of bridge programs (57%) are associated with the Health Science cluster, with Manufacturing or Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics being the occupational focus of a few bridges. Four bridge programs were not connected to any particular career cluster but were intended for career exploration across clusters and occupations.

#### Bridge Program Design

Fifteen (15, or 50%) of bridge programs were designed as a single course, and the other 15 were designed as multiple courses or a series of courses. The duration of the 15 single-course bridge programs ranged from 1 to 26 weeks, with an average duration of 10.3 weeks.

#### Bridge Program Eligibility and Recruitment

Twenty-three (23) of the 30 bridges use specific Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) Math scores, Reading scores, or both, to determine eligibility. Sixteen (16) of these bridge programs require the same range of scores for both TABE Math and Reading, and of this number, nine use the 6.0 to 8.9 range. Fifteen (15) of the bridge programs use the Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA) to assess eligibility, and in 14 of these programs, students scoring above the high beginning English as a second language (ESL) level are eligible to participate.

#### Bridge Program Elements

The Illinois bridge definition includes three main program design elements:

- *Contextualized instruction* that integrates basic reading, math, and language skills and industry or occupational knowledge;
- *Career development* that includes career exploration, career planning within a career area, and understanding the world of work; and
- *Transition services* that provide students with the information and assistance they need to successfully navigate the process of moving from adult education or remedial coursework to credit or occupational programs.

Most of the respondents indicated that their bridge programs incorporated these key elements of the bridge definition. Nearly all (26, or 87%) respondents indicated that their “bridge curriculum integrates basic reading, math, and language skills (academic content) with career and technical content (i.e., contextualized curricula).” In addition, respondents from nearly all (27, or 90%) programs indicated that “career development includes career exploration and planning within the career cluster/occupation.” Finally, the bridge programs provide most of the 17 transition and support services listed in the survey. Most common among these services are individual assistance with the college admissions process, academic advising, career advising and career coaching, and job search assistance.

### Bridge Program Intended Outcomes, Credentials, and Enrollment

Not surprisingly, respondents from most (29, or 97%) programs indicated that student completion of the bridge is an intended outcome. In addition, an intended outcome of most of the bridges is student enrollment in occupational credit courses (26, or 87%) and entry into employment (22, or 73%). Respondents from 15 programs reported that a credential or certificate is awarded on completion of the program.

### Alignment with the Bridge Definition

A principal objective of the survey was to assess the extent to which current Illinois bridge programs are aligned with the Illinois bridge definition. Our survey strategy was designed to obtain responses from all programs that self-identified as bridge programs. Therefore, we anticipated receiving responses from bridge programs that are variously aligned with the Illinois bridge definition. To assess the extent of this alignment, we adopted an operational definition of a bridge based on the survey questions. This definition included the following five criteria:

- Criterion A: Alignment with the eligibility requirements (“reading and math levels at or above the 6th grade through precollege level *or* have English language proficiency at or above the low-intermediate ESL level”);
- Criterion B: Alignment with a career cluster;
- Criterion C: Alignment with the core element of contextualized instruction;
- Criterion D: Alignment with the core element of career development; and
- Criterion E: Alignment with the core element of transition services.

Twenty-one (21, or 70%) of the bridge programs met all five criteria, and an additional six met four of the five criteria. This finding suggests a high level of alignment with the Illinois bridge definition, at least as perceived and reported by respondents. This result is noteworthy, given that the development of many of these bridge programs predated the issuance of the bridge definition. It is important to acknowledge that this conclusion is based solely on self-reported characteristics of the bridge programs.

### SURVEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of the bridge status survey was to describe the current array of bridge programs in Illinois in order to establish a baseline against which to measure future progress in adopting the bridge model as defined by the Illinois Community College Board through the Shifting Gears initiative. In addition, the survey was designed to provide information about the characteristics of these bridge programs along dimensions that may be useful for policy makers.

Although it is beyond the scope of this study to develop recommendations in relation to the bridge definition itself or other aspects of bridge policy, we do offer several recommendations regarding subsequent iterations of the bridge status survey:

- Improve administration of the survey by using the bridge directory web site as a vehicle to support updates by the bridge provider, in addition to using traditional survey methods.
- Use the bridge survey to identify and acquire information about developmental bridge instruction.
- Improve measures of the intensity of bridge programs by gathering data that distinguish between single-course, simultaneous multiple-course, and sequential multiple-course models, and collect more complete data on course contact hours.
- Improve the quality of data collected that identify and characterize the extent of alignment of bridge programs with the core elements of the Illinois bridge definition, especially the contextualization of instruction.
- Strengthen data collection on the nature and extent of transition service delivery.
- Strengthen data collection on bridge outcomes.
- Improve data collection on bridge partnerships and funding sources, and improve data collection on the use of WIA Title I funds to support bridge program development and implementation.
- Improve ability to link survey findings to ICCB approved bridge programs.

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## INTRODUCTION

This report provides a summary of major results of the Illinois Bridge Status Survey, administered online in spring 2010, to understand the extent to which bridge programs are implemented in Illinois, as well as to build a directory of bridge programs that will be made available on the Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) web site at [http://occrll.illinois.edu/projects/shifting\\_gears/bridge\\_directory](http://occrll.illinois.edu/projects/shifting_gears/bridge_directory). The terms *bridge* and *program* are used in this report to refer to all forms of bridge instruction, including single courses and multiple-course sequences. The intended scope of our data collection included bridge instruction delivered through adult education programs or community college developmental education courses, or as part of community college career and technical education (CTE) programs. We recognize that not all these forms of bridge instruction may conform to the general notion of an educational program, nor are they programs within the meaning of that term for Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) program approval purposes. We have used the term *program* in recognition of the fact that practitioners tend to use this term in reference to their bridge instructional offerings.

Bridge programs are an emerging educational concept in Illinois that were initiated in 2007 by Illinois' participation in the Shifting Gears initiative, a state policy reform initiative in the Midwest intended to increase postsecondary credentials and expand job opportunities for low-skilled adults (for more information see <http://www.shifting-gears.org/>). As part of this work, the state recently adopted a formal definition of bridge instruction (see Appendix A) (Illinois Community College Board, 2009). The adoption of the bridge definition is one of many ongoing policy-related activities associated with Shifting Gears and is intended to encourage local entities to develop and implement bridge programs that can take a variety of forms, including programs that are associated with adult education, developmental education, and CTE. The Illinois bridge definition was released by the state in 2009 (Kirby, 2009) after a number of years of bridge program implementation, beginning with the Critical Skills Shortage Initiative (Southern Economic Development Region, n.d.) that funded bridge programs during 2004 and 2005, followed by other bridge program funding using statewide Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I funds and other sources. Therefore, it is likely that many bridge programs operating in the state predate the Illinois bridge definition and align with it to varying degrees. Because of this, the e-mail message that recruited participants for the online survey included a link to the bridge definition. We sought to inform respondents about the focus of the survey by providing this link and asking them to complete the survey for bridge programs having any relevance to the bridge definition. Our intention was to include all programs that self-identified as a bridge program.

## SURVEY DESIGN AND METHODS

The Illinois Bridge Status Survey was designed by Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) staff between October 2009 and March 2010 using Survey Monkey. The initial draft of the survey instrument drew from multiple sources, including the Illinois bridge definition (see Appendix A), results from the Shifting Gears Phase 1.0 evaluation (Bragg, Harmon, Kirby, & Kim, 2009), and the Illinois Programs of Study Guide (Taylor, Kirby, Bragg, Oertle, Jankowski, & Khan, 2009). As five OCCRL staff members reviewed and deliberated the core content and format of the survey instrument, multiple iterations of the survey instrument were developed. In addition, five ICCB staff reviewed a hard copy of the survey instrument in December 2010 and provided useful input on specific questions that helped solidify the final version.

The online survey instrument was pilot tested with three ICCB approved adult education program administrators and one dean of instruction at a community college in February 2010. Three individuals were asked to complete the survey online and comment on its clarity, wording, and ease of navigation. Using a similar protocol, two OCCRL staff conducted phone interviews with the three respondents after they had completed the survey. The fourth individual also pilot tested the survey instrument but in the form of a cognitive laboratory (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). The individual completing this pilot survey provided critical information that OCCRL staff integrated into the final design of the survey instrument.

During the design phase of this project, we developed two separate survey instruments: Survey 1 and Survey 2. Survey 1 was brief and intended for broad distribution to identify (a) one or more bridge programs at the organization; (b) the bridge program coordinator or primary administrator; and (c) the current implementation status of the bridge (see Appendix B for programs under development and organizations that do not have a bridge).

Survey 2 collected detailed information about bridge programs that are currently offered or that were offered within the previous academic year. The individuals to whom Survey 2 was sent were determined by the responses to Survey 1. Survey 2 captured the following details about the bridge: basic descriptive information, partner organization types, funding sources, course information, student eligibility, recruitment methods and audiences, curriculum and instruction, assessment, career development, student support services, and intended student outcomes. The survey instrument was designed mostly as a series of closed-ended questions using nominal and ordinal scales (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009), depending on the question. However, a small number of questions allowed for open-ended responses.

## Administration and Data Collection

Survey 1 and Survey 2 were administered between March 30 and June 15, 2010 (findings from the survey may not reflect current bridge programs on the date of publication as new bridge programs may have been implemented since the collection of data). Survey 1 was distributed to ICCB’s Chief Academic Officer listserv ( $n = 48$ ) and adult education provider listserv ( $n = 103$ ) and was used to identify the primary bridge coordinator to whom Survey 2 was sent. Based on Survey 1, a total of 44 existing bridge programs and 33 bridge programs under development were identified (see Appendix B for a list of programs under development). We did not collect additional data about the bridges under development, but a link to Survey 2 was sent to the administrators of the 44 existing bridge programs on April 15, 2010. During the implementation of Survey 2, two additional bridge programs were identified from Survey 2 respondents, for a total of 46 bridge programs. Some individuals receiving Survey 2 administered more than one of the 46 bridge programs; these individuals were asked to complete Survey 2 for each bridge. Thus, the number of bridge programs (46) is equivalent to the number of potential respondents.

Table 1 displays the number of bridge program administrators who received Survey 2 and indicates their status of survey completion. Of the 46 respondents who received Survey 2, 30 completed the full online survey, two were identified as duplicate entries, three were incorrectly identified as “currently implemented” in Survey 1 but were identified as “under development” in Survey 2, and 11 were nonresponses.

Table 1  
*Completion Status of Survey 2*

Survey Completion Status	Number of Bridge Programs
Completed Survey 2	30
Completed duplicate entries	2
Incorrectly identified programs as “currently implemented” in Survey 1 (identified as “under development” in Survey 2)	3
Nonresponses to Survey 2	11
Total	46

We reviewed the final response to the survey to determine the number of the 103 Adult Education providers and 48 community colleges in Illinois reported bridge activity. Of the 103 adult

education providers, 37 identified bridge activity (either currently implemented or under development). Twenty-two (22) of these 37 were adult education programs within the community college. Of the 48 community colleges in Illinois, 26 reported bridge activity. This includes the 22 associated with adult education providers and four bridges not associated with adult education providers.

All the data from Surveys 1 and 2 were uploaded to Survey Monkey as respondents completed the surveys, and data were downloaded by the researchers in the form of Excel spreadsheets. From these spreadsheets, an SPSS data set was created for analysis.

## Analysis

The data collected from Survey 2 were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Survey 2 responses were tabulated and analyzed using SPSS. Frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, and cross-tabulation were used to identify patterns in the data. Individual bridge site profiles are accessible via the bridge directory mentioned previously, and these individual profiles provide more complete survey responses for each bridge program.

## FINDINGS

### Bridge Program Characteristics

#### *How many bridge programs exist in the state? What organizations offer them? Are they offered currently?*

Table 2 displays the bridge programs, the organization offering each bridge, and the implementation status of the bridge. Thirty (30) bridge programs were identified within 23 different organizations, 77% of which are community colleges. The fourth column in Table 2 indicates whether these bridge programs are associated with the Shifting Gears 1.0 bridge pilot sites or the adult education development or implementation grants. This information was not acquired from the survey but was included because of the ongoing involvement of the OCCRL in evaluating bridge programs in Illinois (Bragg, Harmon, Kirby, & Kim, 2009; Oertle, Kim, Taylor, Harmon, & Bragg, forthcoming). Fifteen (15) of the 30 bridge programs are associated with one of these initiatives, which means 15 are not.

Table 2  
*Current or Recent Bridge Programs in Illinois*

Organization	Bridge Program Name	Implementation Status	SG or AE Bridge
Black Hawk College	Logistics Bridge	Offered within the past year; not currently offered	SG
College of Lake County	Allied Health Bridge	Currently offered	AE bridge
West Chicago High School District 94	ESL Bridge Manufacturing I	Currently offered	None
Elgin Community College	Adult Education Health Care Bridge Program	Currently offered	AE bridge
Erie Neighborhood House	Pathways to Success Manufacturing Bridge Program	Currently offered	None
Instituto Del Progreso Latino	Carreras en Salud (Careers in Health Care)	Currently offered	None
Jewish Vocational Service	Low Intermediate ESL Health Care Careers Bridge Program	Currently offered	AE bridge
Joliet Junior College	Building Workers, Constructing Lives	Offered within the past year; not currently offered	None
Joliet Junior College	50-Plus Community Colleges: Ageless Learning	Currently offered	None
Joliet Junior College	English for Academic Proficiency	Currently offered	None
Joliet Junior College	Career Seekers	Currently offered	None
Joliet Junior College	Summer Bridge for Athletes	Currently offered	None
Kaskaskia College	Kaskaskia College Adult Education Bridge Program	Currently offered	AE bridge
Lewis and Clark Community College	Bridge to Health Sciences	Currently offered	AE bridge
Malcolm X College	Health Care Bridge	Currently offered	SG
McHenry County College	Paraprofessional Certification Bridge	Currently offered	None
Oakton Community College	CNA to RN Pathway	Currently offered	None
Oakton Community College	CNA to LPN Bridge	Currently offered	SG
Olive-Harvey College	Health Care Bridge	Currently offered	SG
Pui Tak Center	Health Care Integrated ESL Bridge	Currently offered	AE bridge
Richard J. Daley College	CNA Transition Bridge	Currently offered	None
Richard J. Daley College	Medical Bridge	Offered within the past year; not currently offered	None
Rock Valley College	Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics Career Express	Currently offered	AE bridge
Shawnee Community College	Bridge to Health Care	Currently offered	AE bridge
Township High School District 214 Community Education	Bridge to Career Pathways in Manufacturing	Currently offered	AE bridge
Triton College	Pre-Health Career Academy	Currently offered	AE bridge
Urbana Adult Education	Bridge to Health Care	Currently offered	None
Wilbur Wright College Adult Education	Bridge to Health Care	Offered within the past year; not currently offered	SG
William Rainey Harper College	Transitions to Career Success	Currently offered	None
William Rainey Harper College	Bridge to Manufacturing	Currently offered	None

*Note.* SG = Shifting Gears; AE = adult education; ESL = English as a second language; CNA = certified nursing assistant; RN = registered nurse; LPN = licensed practical nurse.

### ***With what career clusters are bridge programs associated?***

Table 3 displays the cluster associated with each bridge program. Results show that 17 bridges are associated with the Health Science cluster and that significantly fewer are associated with each of the remaining career cluster categories of Architecture and Construction; Education and Training; Manufacturing; and Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics. Four bridge programs are not associated with a specific career cluster, but rather are intended for career exploration across clusters. These results confirm the strong emphasis on health care among bridge programs currently offered in Illinois. This likely reflects the initial investment of Illinois in bridge programs in the Health Science cluster and the continuing need for employees in health care. The Shifting Gears, adult education, and Critical Skill Shortages Initiative programs include bridges within the Health Science cluster.

Table 3  
*Career Cluster Associated with Bridge Programs*

Career Cluster	Bridge Programs	
	Number	%
Health Science	17	57
Manufacturing	4	13
Career exploration across clusters	4	13
Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics	2	7
Education and Training	2	7
Architecture and Construction	1	3
Total	30	100

### ***What organizational unit or units administer bridge programs?***

The organizational department(s) and unit(s) that administer bridge programs are shown in Table 4. More than half of the respondents indicated that adult education administers the bridge. Of the remaining respondents, three noted a bridge administered by CTE, and several wrote in a category in the optional field (indicated by double asterisks in Table 4). Four bridges were identified as being administered by workforce development, typically referring to college department(s) dedicated to local economic development. Administrators of three bridge programs reported that their programs were administered jointly by adult education and a community college continuing education department. In summary, respondents indicated that adult education is involved in the administration of 21 of the 30 bridges. Table 4 illustrates that although adult education has been the most active in developing and

implementing bridge programs that use Shifting Gears grants, several other departments or units are currently involved in the administration of bridge programs.

Table 4  
*Department(s) or Unit(s) That Administer a Bridge Program*

Department or Unit	Bridge Programs	
	Number	%
Adult Education	17	57
Career and Technical Education	3	10
Workforce Development*	4	13
Adult Education and Community College Continuing Education*	3	10
Career and Technical Education and Workforce Development*	1	3
Adult Education and Hospital*	1	3
Student Success*	1	3
Total	30	100

*Note.* Adult education may refer to all categories of education delivered by providers (adult basic education, adult secondary education, General Educational Development test preparation, and English as a second language).

\* Indicates a self-identified category.

Although bridge instruction can be associated with developmental education within a community college, developmental education was not identified by respondents as the department or unit that administers the bridge (although it was one of the options available). We interpret this finding to mean that adult education bridge programs are currently the predominant form of bridge instruction in Illinois. We anticipate that as developmental bridges are developed by community colleges and approved by ICCB, future versions of this bridge survey will reflect these new forms of bridge instruction.

### ***With what types of organizations do bridge providers partner?***

Respondents were asked to indicate the types of organizations with which their organizations collaborate to develop, support, fund, or implement bridge instruction. Most bridge programs have multiple partners, and the average number of partners per bridge program is three. Table 5 illustrates the variety of organizational partners, with the greatest concentration of partners identified as community college (not adult education); business, industry, and employer; WIA; and adult education—other. A relatively small number of bridge programs collaborated with private foundations or a state or federal government agency.

Table 5  
*Organizational Partners Involved in the Development, Support, Funding, or Other Elements of Bridge Implementation (n = 30)*

Partner Type	Bridge Programs	
	Number	%
Community college (not adult education)	23	77
Business, industry, or employer	17	57
Workforce Investment Act	16	53
Adult education—other	10	33
State government agency	9	29
Adult education community-based organization	7	23
Private foundation	7	23
Adult education—K-12 regional office of education	4	13
Community action agency	3	10
Federal government agency	3	10

*Note.* Respondents could select more than one partner, so the total exceeds 100%.

### **What types of funding are used by bridge programs?**

To understand funding mechanisms used to support bridges, the survey instrument asked respondents to select from a list of types of funding those that support their bridge program(s) (the funding source categories were not defined on the survey and appeared as shown in Table 6). Table 6 reports the responses in order of frequency. The most common funding source is an adult education grant, as identified by 57% of the respondents. Beyond the adult education grant, other sources of funding include private foundation funds, organizational general revenue, and WIA Title I funds. Private foundation funds were identified by about one third of the respondents. Nearly one fourth of the respondents identified organizational general revenue, WIA Title I funds, or both. Less common was the identification of developmental education course reimbursement and CTE course reimbursement from the ICCB. Four respondents indicated the use of developmental education course reimbursement, although no bridge program was identified as being organizationally located within a developmental education department or unit, as described above.

Table 6.  
*Sources of Current Bridge Funding (n = 30)*

Sources of Funding	Bridge Programs	
	Number	%
Adult education grant	17	57
Private foundation funds	10	33
Organizational general revenue (e.g., salary)	7	23
WIA Title I grant or contract	7	23
College, institution, or organization funds	6	20
Student tuition	5	17
WIA Title I individual training account	5	17
Business or employer contribution	5	17
Developmental education course reimbursement from ICCB	4	13
CTE course reimbursement from ICCB	3	10

*Note.* Respondents selected all responses that apply, so the total exceeds 100%. WIA = Workforce Investment Act; ICCB = Illinois Community College Board; CTE = career and technical education.

## Bridge Program Design

### **Are bridge programs designed as single courses or multiple courses?**

Bridge programs vary in design, as was evident from responses showing the proportions of bridges designed as single courses and as multiple courses (Table 7). Of all the respondents, 40% indicated the bridge is designed as a single course, whereas 50% indicated the bridge is designed as multiple courses or a series of courses (Table 7). The three remaining bridges were identified as “other” because, although respondents indicated the bridge includes multiple courses or a series of courses, they completed course information for one course only. Thus, it was unclear whether these three programs are designed as a single course or as multiple courses or a series of courses.

Table 7  
*Bridge Course Design*

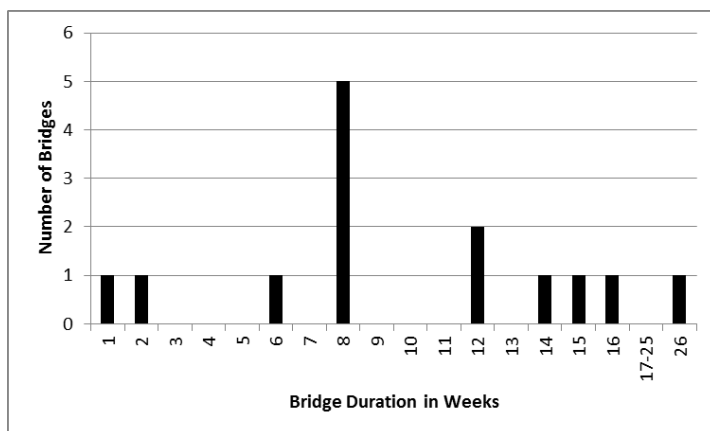
Bridge Course Design	Bridge Programs	
	Number	%
Single course	12	40
Multiple courses or a series of courses	15	50
Other	3	10
Total	30	100

**What is the duration of the bridge programs designed as single courses?**

Analysis of the duration of the bridge programs also sheds light on the variation among bridge curricular structures. This is important because it helps clarify the multiple forms bridge programs can take. The survey instrument asked respondents to identify various characteristics of the courses, such as the course name, number, length, contact hours, and meeting days and times. Analyses of these data allowed some categorization of the bridge courses by duration, as measured in weeks and course contact hours.

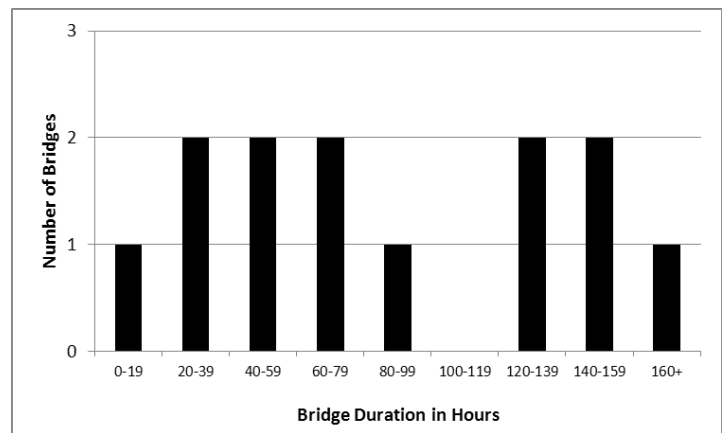
One way to measure the duration of a bridge is by the number of weeks that courses are offered in association with the bridge. Of the 15 bridges designed as single courses (including the three identified as “other” in Table 7), the respondent from one program indicated that the bridge was continuing up to 1 year in length but did not specify the number of weeks. The duration of the remaining 14 bridge programs averaged 10.3 weeks, ranging from 1 to 26 weeks (see Figure 1). All but three bridge programs were offered for more than 8 weeks.

Figure 1  
*Duration in Weeks for Bridge Programs Designed as a Single Course*



Another way to measure the duration of a bridge program is by the number of course contact hours, which accounts for the amount of time spent in classroom instruction. Of the 15 bridges designed as a single course (including the three identified as “other” in Table 7), two did not specify the number of contact hours associated with the bridge program. The duration of the remaining 13 bridges averaged 83.2 course contact hours, ranging from 20 to 180 hours. Figure 2 displays the 13 bridges by duration in course contact hours and illustrates the variation among programs.

Figure 2  
*Duration in Course Contact Hours for Bridge Programs Designed as a Single Course*



**What is the duration of the bridge programs designed as multiple courses or a series of courses?**

We also found variation in the duration of the 15 bridges designed as multiple courses or a series of courses. Again, we measured duration in both weeks and course contact hours. Respondents from four of the 15 bridge programs indicated that at least one of the courses is not designed for a definitive number of weeks but varies in length, is open entry, or is offered so that students can accelerate through the course. Excluding these four bridge programs and one other outlier, (the survey allowed respondents to report course information for a maximum of five courses. The administrator of one bridge program reported course information for five courses and indicated that an additional five courses are part of the bridge program, but data were not collected on those additional courses. Because we lacked course data on all courses in the bridge program, we excluded this bridge from our analysis) the remaining 10 bridges averaged 44.9 weeks per bridge, again illustrating the range in duration of bridge programs.

Figure 3  
Duration in Weeks for Bridge Programs Designed as Multiple Courses or a Series of Courses

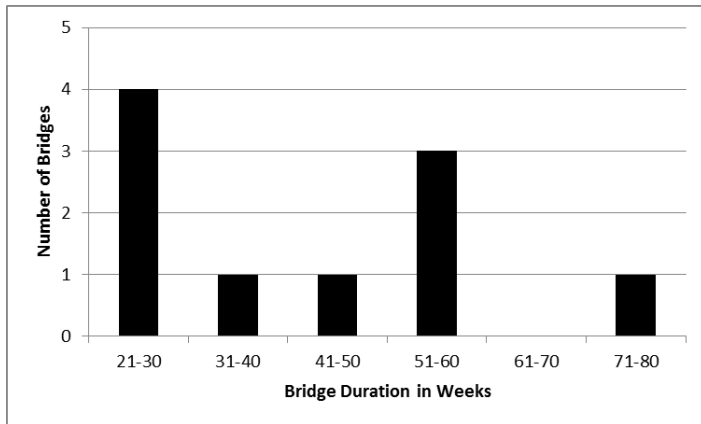


Figure 3 displays the 10 bridges by duration in weeks. However, we could not determine whether the bridge is designed so that the multiple courses occur during the same time period (e.g., three 15-week courses in a 15-week period) or are structured in a series (e.g., three 15-week courses in a 45-week period) because the survey questions were not phrased in a way that enabled us to gather this information. Thus, it is difficult to know the precise duration of bridge programs structured as multiple courses or a series of courses.

The duration of bridge programs designed as multiple courses or a series of courses was also measured by the number of course contact hours. One of the 15 bridge program respondents indicated that the number of contact hours varies for at least one course. Another respondent provided incomplete data on contact hours for at least one course. Excluding these two bridge programs and the one other outlier excluded in duration by weeks, the remaining 12 bridge programs averaged 73 contact hours per course, ranging from a low of 12 to a high of 256 contact hours per bridge course. As with duration as measured in weeks, we were unable to determine whether the courses are implemented concurrently or in a series because the questions on the survey instrument were not phrased in a way that enabled us to gather this information.

Figure 4  
Duration in Course Contact Hours for Bridge Programs Designed as Multiple Courses or a Series of Courses

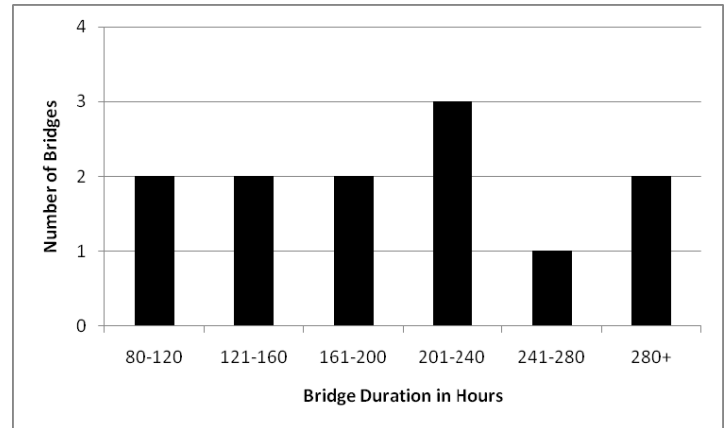


Figure 4 displays the 12 bridge programs according to the number of contact hours of instruction, ranging from 80 to 120 hours to 280 or more hours.

#### What is the intensity of the bridge programs?

We defined *intensity* as the number of bridge course contact hours divided by the number of weeks of bridge instruction, to provide a measure of the number of hours per week of bridge instruction. We used this measure of intensity for bridge programs designed as single courses only because we were unable to ascertain whether bridges designed as multiple courses or a series of courses are implemented concurrently or in a series, as mentioned previously.

The intensity of bridge programs designed as single courses ranged from 2.5 to 20.0 hours per week, as shown in Table 8. The measure of intensity shows range of intensity among bridges with the bridges labeled J, K, L, and M as the most intensive bridge programs, whereas those labeled A, B, C, and D are among the least intensive bridge programs. The remainder of the bridge programs are in the middle range of the intensity scale. Some of these bridge programs are unique because they have a very short or a very long duration in number of weeks (e.g., F, I, and M).

Table 8  
Intensity of Courses for Bridges Programs Designed as a Single Course

Key	Institution or Organization	Bridge Name	Total Hours	Total Weeks	Intensity Measure (Hours/Week)
A	William Rainey Harper College	Bridge to Manufacturing	40.0	16.0	2.5
B	Elgin Community College	Adult Education Health Care Bridge Program	40.2	12.0	3.3
C	Community High School Adult Education	ESL Bridge Manufacturing I	60.0	15.0	4.0
D	McHenry County College	Paraprofessional Certification Bridge	24.0	6.0	4.0
E	Township High School District 214 Community Education	Bridge to Career Pathways in Manufacturing	84.0	14.0	6.0
F	Pui Tak Center	Health Care Integrated ESL Bridge	180.0	26.0	6.9
G	Jewish Vocational Service	Low Intermediate ESL Health Care Bridge Program	64.0	8.0	8.0
H	Erie Neighborhood House	Pathways to Success Manufacturing Bridge Program	150.0	12.0	12.5
I	William Rainey Harper College	Transitions to Career Success	27.0	2.0	13.5
J	Rock Valley College	TDL Career Express	124.0	8.0	15.5
K	Malcolm X College	Health Care Bridge	128.0	8.0	16.0
L	Urbana Adult Education	Bridge to Health Care	141.5	8.0	17.6
M	Joliet Junior College	Summer Bridge for Athletes	20.0	1.0	20.0

Note. ESL = English as a second language; TDL = transportation, distribution, and logistics.

### Bridge Program Eligibility and Recruitment

#### What are the student eligibility requirements for the bridge programs?

Respondents were asked about the student eligibility requirements based on students' scores on the TABE, CELSA, or both. Most bridge programs specified ranges of scores on these tests for a student to be eligible to participate in the bridge program. Some sites indicated the use of COMPASS or another placement exam to determine student eligibility, but these alternatives were rare. We report results first for bridge programs using TABE and then for those using CELSA.

Table 9 shows that 23 of the 30 bridge programs (77%) use either the TABE Math or TABE Reading score; however, seven bridge programs do not use the TABE as an eligibility requirement. Of the programs that do not use TABE, three use CELSA and four identified other exams used to determine student eligibility. The variation in TABE cutoff scores used by the bridge programs is shown in Table 10. Results showed a

relationship between the TABE Reading and TABE Math levels, with 16 of the 23 sites (70%) having the same requirement for these two tests. In other words, for bridge programs using specific TABE scores to determine student eligibility, most (16 sites) require the same range of scores for both Math and Reading. Alternatively, four sites have no TABE Math requirement but have a TABE Reading requirement, and three sites require different levels of TABE Math and Reading. A large number of bridge programs (nine) use the 6.0 to 8.9 range for TABE Reading and Math, as shown in Table 10.

Table 9  
Use of TABE Reading and Math Scores (n = 30)

TABE Score	Reading Used	Reading Not Used
Math Used	19	0
Math Not Used	4	7

Table 10  
*Number and Percentage of Bridge Programs by TABE Reading and Math Score Range (n = 30)*

TABE Score Range	Reading								Total	% of Total
	>4.0	<6.0	6.0 to 8.9	6.0 to 12.0	6.0 to 12.9	9.0 to 12.0	9.0 to 12.9	No Reading		
Math										
>4.0	1								1	3
<6.0		1							1	3
6.0 to 8.9			9			2			11	37
6.0 to 12.0				1					1	3
6.0 to 12.9					1		1		2	7
9.0 to 12.0						2			2	7
9.0 to 12.9							1		1	3
No Math			2			2		7	11	37
Total	1	1	11	1	1	6	2	7	30	
% of Total	3	3	37	3	3	20	7	23		100

Approximately half of the bridges use the CELSA as an assessment instrument to determine student eligibility for a bridge program, suggesting that many bridges enroll ESL students. Of the 15 bridges that use the CELSA, all but one indicated students scoring above the high beginning ESL level are eligible to participate (Table 11). Seven bridges limit eligibility to only one CELSA level, whereas seven others include a combination of CELSA levels.

Table 11  
*Number and Percentage of Bridge Programs by CELSA Level(s)*

CELSA Level(s)	Bridge Programs	
	Number	%
High beginning ESL	1	3
Low intermediate ESL	2	7
High intermediate ESL	3	10
Advanced ESL	1	3
High intermediate ESL and advanced ESL	5	17
Low intermediate ESL, high intermediate ESL, and advanced ESL	2	7
Not required	15	50
Other	1	3
Total	30	100

Note. CELSA = Combined English Language Skills Assessment; ESL = English as a second language.

***What recruitment methods are used to reach potential students for the bridge programs? Who are the targets of these recruitment methods?***

Results suggested that bridge programs use a large variety of recruitment methods to reach out to various audiences. The two tables included in this section summarize findings related to recruitment. Table 12 is organized into three sections according to the recruitment method (flyer, brochure, or letter; personal visit or presentation; and e-mail), with each method targeting one of five audiences (faculty or staff; current students in the target population; local businesses, community centers, churches, etc.; local workforce entities; and local educational entities [secondary or postsecondary]). The most frequent recruitment activities in each section are flyer, brochure, and letter to current students in the target population (i.e., specific classes); personal visit or presentation to current students in the target population (i.e., specific classes); and e-mail to faculty or staff.

It was evident based on the results shown in Table 12 that the most frequent recruitment method used is a flyer or brochure. Many bridge programs also recruit via personal visit or presentation, but fewer use e-mail as a recruitment method. The data in Table 12 suggest that although a flyer or brochure is used quite frequently, larger proportions of respondents perceive recruitment via a personal visit or presentation to be more successful than recruitment via a flyer or brochure. Table 12 also suggests that faculty or staff and current students in the target population are two of the most frequent audiences reached via the recruitment methods. Of these two audiences, respondents reported they consider reaching out to current students in the target population as more successful than reaching out to faculty or staff.

Table 12  
*Number and Percentage of Bridges by Recruitment Method*

Recruitment Method	Method Used		Method Perceived as Successful	
	Number	% of Total ( <i>n</i> = 30)	Number	% of Bridges That Use This Method
Flyer, brochure, or letter to				
• Faculty or staff	25	83	12	48
• Current students in the target population (i.e., specific classes)	25	83	17	68
• Local businesses, community centers, churches, etc.	24	80	12	50
• Local workforce entities	22	73	7	32
• Local educational entities (secondary, postsecondary)	18	60	3	17
Personal visit or presentation to				
• Faculty or staff	22	73	13	59
• Current students in the target population (i.e., specific classes)	25	83	20	80
• Local businesses, community centers, churches, etc.	15	50	9	60
• Local workforce entities	15	50	8	53
• Local educational entities (secondary, postsecondary)	12	40	3	25
E-mail to				
• Faculty or staff*	19	63	3	16
• Current students in the target population (i.e., specific classes)*	8	27	3	38
• Local businesses, community centers, churches, etc.*	10	33	2	20
• Local workforce entities*	12	40	3	25
• Local educational entities (secondary, postsecondary)*	8	27	1	13

*Note.* Respondents selected all responses that apply, so the total exceeds 100%.

\* Indicates three to five nonresponses.

In addition to the recruitment methods mentioned previously, the survey asked respondents to indicate recruitment methods that might reach different types of audiences and broader audiences than those listed in Table 12. As shown in Table 13, more than half of the bridges used student services, counseling services, or academic services, and many bridges used recruitment or information fairs to recruit students. Of the respondents indicating their organization recruits via a recruitment or information fair, a larger percentage perceived this type of recruitment as successful when conducted at a nonbridge site (52%) than when conducted at a bridge site (42%).

Small proportions of bridge programs use recruitment methods that target broader audiences (e.g., newspapers, TV, radio, and web sites; see Table 13 on page 11). For the bridge programs whose recruitment methods target broader audiences, fewer than half of those respondents considered the methods successful. In contrast, recruitment via an organizational newsletter or newspaper or via a local newspaper was perceived as more successful than recruitment through TV, radio, and web sites.

### Bridge Program Elements

Results in this section are drawn from a core portion of the survey that asked respondents to identify characteristics of the bridge in the following five categories: curriculum, instruction, assessment, partnership or collaboration, and career development. The question asked respondents to read a series of statements about their bridge program and indicate whether each statement was a characteristic of their program, not a characteristic of their program, or not applicable. In an additional portion of the survey, respondents were asked similar questions about transition services as well as the type of transition services provided. Some of these questions helped determine the extent to which the bridges align with the three core elements of the Illinois bridge definition: contextualized instruction, career development, and transition services (see Appendix A for the bridge definition).

Table 13  
*Number and Percentage of Bridges by Additional Recruitment Method*

Recruitment Method	Method Used		Method Perceived as Successful	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Bridges That Use This Method
Meeting with student services, counseling, or academic services staff	21	71	13	59
Recruitment or information fair at a bridge site	12	42	5	38
Recruitment or information fair at a nonbridge site(s)	16	52	9	56
Organizational newsletter or newspaper	12	39	5	42
Local newspaper	12	42	6	46
Television advertisement	4	13	1	25
Public radio	9	29	3	33
Promotion on an institution or organization web site	14	48	3	20
Web site dedicated to the bridge program	6	19	1	17

*Note.* Respondents selected all responses that apply, so the total exceeds 100%.

### **What bridge programs include contextualized instruction?**

The first core element of the bridge definition is contextualized instruction, defined as instruction that “integrates basic reading, math, and language skills and industry/occupational knowledge” (Illinois Community College Board, 2009). The survey instrument included several statements related to curriculum and instruction, and respondents were asked to indicate if the statement applies to their bridge. One statement on the survey instrument was designed specifically to represent this element as defined in the bridge definition and read, “Bridge curriculum integrates basic reading, math, and language skills (academic content) with career and technical content (i.e., contextualized curricula).” Of the 30 bridge programs identified, 26 (87%) respondents indicated that this statement applies to their bridge program. As such, it is reasonable to assume that respondents consider their bridges to have this basic characteristic of the bridge definition. To further understand the extent to which these 26 bridges align with the element of contextualized instruction, several other statements were included that reflected more detailed characteristics of contextualized instruction, as shown in Table 14. These additional characteristics are not included in the official ICCB bridge definition but were included on the survey to help provide additional information about how

contextualized instruction is delivered in these programs. As Table 14 shows, more than 80% of the respondents answered “yes” to three of the seven statements. The most commonly chosen specific characteristics of contextualized instruction are instructor access to professional development, curriculum that was developed collaboratively, and curriculum that contains the knowledge and skills common for entry-level occupations within the industry or career cluster. Less commonly chosen responses were the delivery of instruction by an occupational instructor and another instructor (this is often manifested as an integrated instructional approach) and the delivery of instruction by two or more instructors.

Although all 26 of the respondents indicated that their bridge programs have contextualized curricula, the results displayed in Table 14 indicate that a variety of additional characteristics may or may not be present. Respondents from slightly less than two thirds of the 26 bridge programs indicated their program actively involves employers, and only approximately one half indicated their program involves more than one instructor, including an instructor who teaches CTE content.

Table 14

*Number and Percentage of Bridge Programs with Additional Characteristics of Contextualized Instruction (n = 26)*

Characteristic	Yes		No		Not Applicable	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Instructors have access to professional development directed at contextualized instruction and teaching strategies.	24	92	0	0	2	8
Bridge curriculum is developed collaboratively with input from partners.	24	92	2	8	0	0
Bridge curriculum contains the knowledge and skills common for entry-level occupations within the industry or career cluster.	21	81	2	8	3	11
Employers are actively involved in bridge curriculum development, bridge instructional delivery, or both.	16	62	7	27	3	11
Instructor qualifications include education or experience in the occupational field associated with the bridge.	15	58	9	34	2	8
Instruction is delivered by two or more instructors in the classroom.	12	50	12	50	0	0
Instruction is shared between an occupational instructor and any of the following: a GED ( <i>ASE</i> ), ABE, ESL, developmental education, or academic (math, English) instructor.	11	48	11	48	1	4

*Note.* Some rows may not add to 26 because of nonresponses. GED = General Educational Development; ASE = adult secondary education; ABE = adult basic education; ESL = English as a second language. Respondents selected all responses that apply, so the total exceeds 100%.

**What bridge programs include career development?**

The second element of the bridge definition is career development, a component defined as that which “includes career exploration, career planning within a career area, and understanding of the world of work (specific elements depend upon the level of the bridge program and whether participants are already incumbent workers in the specific field)” (Illinois Community College Board, 2009). One statement on the survey instrument was designed specifically to represent this element and read, “Career development includes career exploration and planning within the career cluster/occupation.” Of the 30 bridge program respondents, 27 (90%) indicated that this statement applies to their bridge program. As such, it is reasonable to

assume that respondents consider these bridges to have this basic characteristic of the bridge definition.

Three additional statements identified the extent to which these 27 bridge programs incorporated career development in their programs, as shown in Table 15. The majority of the 27 bridge program respondents checked “yes” to all three statements. More respondents, however, identified with the first two statements than with the third. These additional characteristics are not included in the official ICCB bridge definition but were included on the survey to help provide additional information about how career development is delivered in these programs. Again, they suggest that, similar to contextualized instruction, there is variation in how bridge programs have operationalized the career development concept.

Table 15

*Number and Percentage of Bridge Programs with Additional Characteristics of Career Development (n = 27)*

Statement	Yes		No		Not Applicable	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Bridge curriculum integrates basic reading, math, and language skills (academic content) with career exploration and development.	24	89	3	11	0	0
Career assessments are used to determine students’ career interests and abilities.	21	78	6	22	0	0
All bridge students complete individual career plans.	17	63	9	33	0	0

*Note.* Respondents selected all responses that apply, so the total exceeds 100%.

### What transition services do bridge programs offer?

The third core element in the Illinois bridge definition is transition services. This element is defined as services “that provide students with the information and assistance they need to successfully navigate the process of moving from adult education or remedial coursework to credit or occupational programs” (Illinois Community College Board, 2009). The definition lists several examples of services and does not mandate or require any specific type of service, but does indicate that services be provided “as needed and available.” To account for the variety of potential services provided, the bridge survey included a basic list of transition services and asked respondents to identify which transition services are provided to their bridge students (the question asked bridge program administrators if the service is an intentional part of the program or is designed specifically for the program, but did not ask them to indicate if the service is not provided. Thus, it is reasonable to assume

that a nonresponse indicates the service is not available or is not intentionally provided to students). Table 16 reports the number and percentage of bridge programs providing specific transition services, as listed on the survey and identified by respondents.

For each transition service listed on the survey, at least half of the respondents indicated the service is provided to bridge students. This finding suggests that the 17 transition or support services listed were quite common among the 30 respondents to the survey. As indicated in Table 16, some services were more common among bridge programs than others. Among those services provided by most bridge programs are individual assistance with the college admissions process, academic advising, career advising or career coaching, and job search assistance. Those services implemented by the fewest bridge programs are work-based learning, program or classroom shadowing, and peer tutoring.

Table 16  
Number and Percentage of Transition and Support Services (n = 30)

Transition and Support Service	Bridges Providing This Service	
	Number	%
Individualized assistance with college admissions process	29	97
Career advising or career coaching	28	93
Academic advising	28	93
Job search assistance (e.g., job coaching, resume assistance)	26	87
College orientation	25	83
College campus visit	25	83
Supplemental instruction (e.g., tutoring services, technology services)	25	83
Employer visits	24	80
Training program presentations	24	80
Personal counseling	24	80
Individualized assistance with the completion of financial aid	23	77
Transportation assistance (e.g., bus tokens, gas cards, cab or mileage reimbursement)	21	70
Intentional learning community	20	67
Exam fees (i.e., required exam fees are waived or students are reimbursed)	19	63
Peer tutoring	18	60
Program or classroom shadowing	17	57
Work-based learning (e.g., internships, job shadowing)	16	53

Note. Respondents selected all responses that apply, so the total exceeds 100%.

In addition to analyzing the provision of transition and support services by the frequency with which respondents indicated the service is intentionally provided in their bridge program, the number of services provided by each bridge was calculated. The number of services provided ranged from four to all 17 services, with a mean of 13 services (Table 17). Slightly less than half the respondents indicated that all 17 services on the list are provided to their bridge students.

Table 17  
*Frequency and Percentage of Transition or Support Services*

Number of Services	Bridge Programs	
	Frequency	%
17	13	43
14	3	10
11	4	13
10	3	10
9	2	7
8	2	7
7	1	3
6	1	3
4	1	3
Total	30	100

Similar to the list of statements given to respondents for the first two elements of the bridge definition (contextualized instruction and career development), the survey included a list of statements related to transition services and asked respondents to indicate “yes,” “no,” or “not applicable” for whether the statement applies to their bridge program. The number and percentage of responses to each statement are presented in Table 18. The responses to these statements provided additional insights into the extent to which the bridges align with the state’s definition. Although all statements were relevant, we highlight two statements here. The first is the statement related to “college knowledge” (Conley, 2005), and with respect to this specific statement, all but one of the respondents indicated that this statement applies to their program, suggesting that most respondents intentionally integrate college knowledge into their bridge program in some manner. The second statement of particular relevance to the definition (statement three in Table 18) addresses the intentionality of bridges to identify student needs and provide appropriate services. Similar to the statement about college knowledge, most of the respondents reported “yes” and only one reported “no”; there was also one nonresponse. Although the extent to which bridge programs actually identify and fulfill the needs of students and provide them with appropriate services could not be determined from the self-reported data, the findings suggest that most respondents believe their programs are offering transition services and are therefore aligned with this component of the bridge definition.

Table 18  
*Number and Percentage of Bridge Programs by Transition Service Statements (n = 30)*

Statement	Yes		No		Not Applicable	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Transition services provide students with the information, knowledge, and assistance (“college knowledge”) to navigate educational systems and make informed decisions about educational and occupational options.	29	97	0	0	1	3
Most transition services are accessible to students during daytime operational hours of the organization (i.e., 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.).	29	97	0	0	1	3
The bridge deliberately attempts to identify students’ needs and self-identified barriers and provide appropriate services.	28	93	1	3	0	0
Besides delivering the curriculum, the instructor(s) serves as a transition coordinator, case manager, and/or counselor to the bridge students.	18	60	11	37	0	0
Each bridge student is assigned to a transition coordinator or case manager, who assists students in accessing the needed services.	18	60	10	33	2	7
Most transition services are accessible to students during the evening hours.	14	47	11	37	4	13
Most transition services are accessible to students during weekends.	4	13	20	67	4	13

Note. Respondents selected all responses that apply, so the total exceeds 100%.

## Bridge Program Intended Outcomes, Credentials, and Enrollment

### *What outcomes do respondents consider appropriate for their bridge programs?*

Understanding the expected outcomes of the bridge programs is important for understanding the purposes of the programs. To identify potential bridge outcomes, the survey asked participants to select, from a list of outcomes, those they consider applicable to their bridge program. Respondents were asked to select all that apply (see Table 19). Completion of the bridge program was the most frequent response and was reported by 29 of the 30 respondents (the one respondent who indicated completion of the bridge is not an outcome also indicated that students are able to reenroll in the bridge as needed). Two other frequent responses were the outcomes of (a) enrollment in occupational credit course, and (b) entry into employment. These results suggest that bridge programs are intended to lead students either to further education or into employment after they complete the program, which is consistent with the literature on bridge programs and the state’s definition. Indeed, most respondents selected more than one outcome (the average was approximately four), which again suggests multiple options for students on completion of the bridge program.

One rationale for a bridge program is that it reduces the need for developmental education and transitions students into postsecondary credit instruction. In light of this, the outcome of enrollment in developmental education courses identified by seven (27%) of the respondents may seem counterintuitive. Looking specifically at the responses of these seven respondents, we found that enrollment in developmental education is not the only outcome of those programs. Respondents from all seven programs selected enrollment in occupational credit courses as a bridge outcome, which might support the intention to transition students into credit-bearing coursework while recognizing the reality of potential enrollment in developmental education. In addition, the eligibility requirements of these programs were analyzed to determine if there was a relationship between eligibility and outcomes. Of these seven programs, five do not have TABE requirements, suggesting that students at multiple academic levels might be eligible for participation. Further, three of the seven have eligibility requirements for ESL students that are at the lowest educational functioning level or at a range from a low to a high educational functioning level. None of these programs has eligibility requirements at higher levels of proficiency (based on TABE or CELSA scores), which might explain why these bridges consider enrollment in developmental education a potential outcome.

Table 19  
*Number and Percentage of Bridge Programs by Outcomes (n = 30)*

Outcome	Bridge Programs	
	Number	%
Completion of bridge	29	97
Enrollment in occupational credit courses that lead to the completion of an approved certificate, AAS, AA, or AS program	26	87
Entry into employment	22	73
Enrollment in general credit courses that lead to the completion of an approved certificate, AAS, AA, or AS program	18	60
Completion of GED	16	53
Enrollment in developmental education courses	7	23
Completion of developmental education courses	7	23

*Note.* Respondents selected all responses that apply, so the total exceeds 100%. AAS = Associate in Applied Science; AA = Associate of Arts; AS = Associate of Science; GED = General Educational Development.

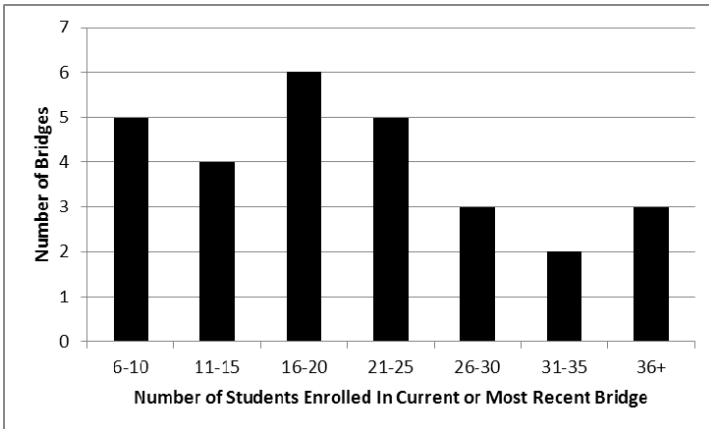
### *How many bridge programs offer a credential or certificate?*

Fifteen (50%) respondents reported that a credential or certificate is awarded on completion of the bridge program, and an equal number reported that a credential or certificate is not awarded on completion of the program. We asked respondents to indicate the name of the credential or certificate awarded in the bridge program; this information is located in the online directory.

### *How many students are enrolled in bridge programs?*

The survey asked respondents to indicate the number of students enrolled in the current or most recent bridge program. This allowed us to better understand the extent to which the bridge programs reach larger and smaller student populations. Figure 5 displays a histogram of the responses to this question by administrators from 28 bridge programs. Although the range of students being served is quite large, most of the bridge programs serve more than 10 and fewer than 35 students.

Figure 5  
 Number of Students Enrolled in the Current or Most Recent Bridge Program



### Alignment with the bridge definition

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, the survey implementation strategy was intentionally inclusive, targeting all programs that self-identified as a bridge. Consequently, we anticipated receiving responses from bridge programs that are not fully in alignment with the Illinois bridge definition. Hence, all respondents self-identifying as having a bridge program were included in this report. However, we consider it valuable to identify the bridge programs that, based on their responses, seem to align with the minimal criteria stated in the bridge definition. For the purpose of this analysis, we selected the five most salient criteria:

- Criterion A: Alignment with the eligibility requirements (“reading and math levels at or above the 6th grade through pre-college level *or* have English language proficiency at or above the low-intermediate ESL level”);
- Criterion B: Alignment with a career cluster;
- Criterion C: Alignment with the core element of contextualized instruction;
- Criterion D: Alignment with the core element of career development; and
- Criterion E: Alignment with the core element of transition services.

Based on survey responses representing 30 bridge programs, 21 of the programs meet all five criteria. Table 20 displays all 30 programs and the five criteria, and indicates whether the bridge aligns with the bridge definition according to these five criteria.

It is important to note that these categorizations are based solely on the responses provided to the survey. Consequently, they are dependent on the respondents’ understanding of the questions used to derive this categorization. These results are thus meant to give an overall sense of the level of alignment with the Illinois bridge definition and are not meant to replace what can be known about these programs directly through ICCB course approval, on-site evaluation, or monitoring.

## SURVEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of the bridge status survey was to describe the current array of bridge programs in Illinois and to establish a baseline against which to measure future progress in the adoption of the bridge model as defined by the ICCB through the Shifting Gears initiative. In addition, the survey was designed to provide information about the characteristics of bridge programs along dimensions that may be useful for policy makers. It is beyond the scope of this study to develop recommendations in relation to the bridge definition itself or other aspects of bridge policy. However, we do offer the following recommendations regarding subsequent iterations of the bridge status survey:

- Improve administration of the survey by using the bridge directory web site as a vehicle to support updates by the bridge provider, in addition to using traditional survey methods.
- Use the bridge survey to identify and acquire information about developmental bridge instruction.
- Improve measures of the intensity of bridge programs by gathering data that distinguish between single-course, simultaneous multiple-course, and sequential multiple-course models, and collect more complete data on course contact hours.
- Improve the quality of data collected that identify and characterize the extent of alignment of bridge programs with the core elements of the Illinois bridge definition, especially the contextualization of instruction.
- Strengthen data collection on the nature and extent of transition service delivery.
- Strengthen data collection on bridge outcomes.
- Improve data collection on bridge partnerships and funding sources, and improve data collection on the use of WIA Title I funds to support bridge program development and implementation.
- Improve ability to link survey findings to ICCB approved bridge programs.

Table 20  
Alignment of Bridge Programs with the Illinois Bridge Definition

Organization	Bridge Name	Alignment with the Bridge Definition					Full Alignment
		Criterion A	Criterion B	Criterion C	Criterion D	Criterion E	
Black Hawk College	Logistics Bridge	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
College of Lake County	Allied Health Bridge	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Community High School Adult Education	ESL Bridge Manufacturing I	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Elgin Community College	Adult Education Health Care Bridge Program	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Erie Neighborhood House	Pathways to Success Manufacturing Bridge Program		X	X	X	X	No
Instituto Del Progreso Latino	Carreras en Salud (Careers in Health Care)	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Jewish Vocational Service	Low Intermediate ESL Health Care Careers Bridge Program	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Joliet Junior College	Building Workers, Constructing Lives	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Joliet Junior College	50-Plus Community Colleges: Ageless Learning				X	X	No
Joliet Junior College	English for Academic Proficiency					X	No
Joliet Junior College	Career Seekers	X			X	X	No
Joliet Junior College	Summer Bridge for Athletes		X	X	X	X	No
Kaskaskia College	Kaskaskia College Adult Education Bridge Program	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Lewis and Clark Community College	Bridge to Health Sciences	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Malcolm X College	Health Care Bridge	X	X		X	X	No
McHenry County College	Paraprofessional Certification Bridge		X	X	X	X	No
Oakton Community College	CNA to RN Pathway	X	X	X		X	No
Oakton Community College	CNA to LPN Bridge	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Olive-Harvey College	Health Care Bridge	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Pui Tak Center	Health Care Integrated ESL Bridge	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Richard J. Daley College	CNA Transition Bridge	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Richard J. Daley College	Medical Bridge	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Rock Valley College	Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics Career Express	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Shawnee Community College	Bridge to Health Care	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Township High School District 214 Community Education	Bridge to Career Pathways in Manufacturing	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Triton College	Pre-Health Career Academy	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Urbana Adult Education	Bridge to Health Care	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Wilbur Wright College Adult Education	Bridge to Health Care	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
William Rainey Harper College	Transitions to Career Success	X		X		X	No
William Rainey Harper College	Bridge to Manufacturing	X	X	X	X	X	Yes
Total		25	26	26	27	30	21

Note. ESL = English as a second language; CNA = certified nursing assistant; RN = registered nurse; LPN = licensed practical nurse.

## REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX A

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# BRIDGE DEFINITION AND CORE ELEMENTS

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Bridge programs prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in credit-bearing postsecondary education and training leading to career-path employment in high-demand, middle- and high-skilled occupations. The goal of bridge programs is to sequentially bridge the gap between the initial skills of individuals and what they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and career-path employment.

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## CORE ELEMENTS

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Bridge programs assist students in obtaining the necessary academic, employability, and technical skills through three required components—contextualized instruction, career development, and support services. Required elements include

- *Contextualized instruction* that integrates basic reading, math, and language skills and industry/occupation knowledge.
- *Career development* that includes career exploration, career planning within a career area, and understanding the world of work (specific elements depend upon the level of the bridge program and on whether participants are already incumbent workers in the specific field).
- *Transition services* that provide students with the information and assistance they need to successfully navigate the process of moving from adult education or remedial coursework to credit or occupational programs. Services may include (as needed and available) academic advising, tutoring, study skills, coaching, and referrals to individual support services (e.g., transportation and child care).

*Note:* Career development and transition services should take into account the needs of those low-income adults who will need to find related work as they progress in their education and career paths.

### Eligibility

Bridge programs are designed for adults 16 years and older, who

- Have reading and math levels at or above the 6th grade through pre-college level *or*
- Have English language proficiency at or above the low-intermediate ESL level
- May or may not have a high school credential
- May or may not be an incumbent worker

Specific eligibility requirements will depend upon the type of provider offering the bridge program and program requirements.

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## PROGRAM DESIGN OPTIONS

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A bridge program may be designed as 1) a single course (for students at higher reading and math levels) that moves students directly into credit-bearing courses, with the aim of eliminating the need for remediation or

2) a series of courses, in which students first complete a lower-level bridge course that prepares them to enter a noncredit or credit occupational course or program that leads to an entry-level job. In this case, the student can stop out for needed work/income and return to a higher level bridge course without having to repeat content.

The bridge program must prepare students to enter credit-bearing courses and programs within one of the 16 nationally recognized career clusters (see: <http://www.careerclusters.org/16clusters.cfm>). That is, the course content must contain the knowledge and skills common for entry-level occupations within a broad cluster (e.g. Health Science, Manufacturing, Information Technology, etc.). This curriculum design element exposes the student to career information and to information about the skills and knowledge required by a broad range of occupational options within a cluster. The bridge program must be of sufficient duration and intensity to produce these transition results.

### **Education and Training Providers (and Partnerships)**

Bridge programs may be provided by (1) an Illinois Community College Board-approved and funded adult education program; (2) the credit or noncredit department(s) of a community college; and (3) community-based organizations or other types of providers that offer noncredit workforce training.<sup>1</sup>

Bridge programs may be offered by a single entity (e.g., a community-based organization or a community college) or by a partnership (e.g., a community-based organization and a community college). Regardless of the provider, they

- May provide opportunities to earn college credit (such as through escrow credit accounts)
- May offer dual enrollment in credit and noncredit programs
- May offer a multilevel program that moves people from an adult education course offered by one provider to a noncredit occupational course offered by the same or another provider.

All bridge program providers will use pre-skill assessments consistent with program requirements to place students into the appropriate courses as well as post-skill assessments to measure progress, and all providers will use data tracking systems to collect and analyze key information about bridge program participants and graduates.

## **Outcomes**

### *Short-Term*

1. Higher number of low-income working adults enroll in postsecondary education.
2. Bridge program graduates who enroll in credit programs will succeed in their courses.

### *Long-Term*

1. Higher proportion of low-income working adults attain degrees and/or certificates.
2. Higher proportion of Adult Basic Education (ABE)/GED, English-as-a-second-language (ESL), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and developmental/remedial adult learners transition into and complete associate's degrees and/or certificates.
3. Increases in earnings and job quality for low-income adults engaged in career pathways.

APPENDIX B

Bridge Programs Under Development and Organizations Without a Current Bridge

Table B1  
Bridge Programs Under Development

Organization	Bridge Program Name	Associated Cluster
Asian Human Services	To be determined	Nonresponse
Black Hawk College	Bridge to Health Care	Health Science
Chicago Commons	NCU–Bridge to Construction and Development	Architecture and Construction
Chicago Commons	Bridge to Health Care Industry	Health Science
City Colleges of Chicago, OHC	Health Care	Health Science
City Colleges of Chicago, OHC	Transportation	Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
Chinese Mutual Aid Association	Nonresponse	Nonresponse
Danville Area Community College	Nonresponse	Nonresponse
Heartland Community College	ESL Bridge to Health Careers	Health Science
Illinois Central College	Bridge to Health Care	Health Science
Illinois Central College	Bridge to Manufacturing (Welding)	Manufacturing
Illinois Eastern Community Colleges	To be determined	Health Science
John A. Logan College	Health Care Bridge	Health Science
Kishwaukee College	Adult Education Transition to Health Care Careers	Health Science
McHenry County College	Basic Nursing Assisting	Health Science
McHenry County College	Automotive	Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
Morton College	Morton College Summer Bridge	A career cluster is not associated with the bridge
Morton Community College	Bridge to Health Care	Health Science
Oakton Community College	Health Care Bridge–Advocate	Health Science
Parkland College	Bridge to Health Care	Health Science
Polish American Association	Bridge to Health Care	Health Science
Polish American Association	Bridge to Manufacturing	Manufacturing
Rend Lake College	Health Care Pathways	Health Science
Shawnee Community College	Hospitality and Tourism	Hospitality and Tourism
Shawnee Community College	Bridge to Education and Careers	A career cluster is not associated with the bridge
Southern Illinois University–Carbondale/EDC	Jobs in our area–Contractors	Architecture and Construction
Southwestern Illinois College	Pre-Nurse Assistant	Health Science
Tolton Center of De La Salle Institute	Tolton Bridge to Health Care Project	Health Science
Triton College	Pre-Electrician Academy	Architecture and Tourism
Triton College	Pre-Computer Tech	Information Technology
Urbana Adult Education	Bridge to Business/Entrepreneurship	Business Management and Administration
Wilbur Wright College	Health Care Bridge Part 2	Health Science
William Rainey Harper College	Bridge to Health Care	Health Science

Note. Organization and bridge program names are self-reported.

Table B2  
*Organizations Without a Current Bridge Program*

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Organization
Asian Human Services
Chinese Mutual Aid Association
Danville Area Community College
Heartland Community College
Highland Community College
Illinois Central College
Illinois Eastern Community Colleges
Kishwaukee College
Moraine Valley Community College
Morton Community College
Parkland College
Polish American Association
Rend Lake College
Sauk Valley Community College
School District U-46
Southern Illinois University–Carbondale/EDC
Tolton Center of De La Salle Institute
World Relief–Chicago

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