ILLINOIS WORK-BASED LEARNING INNOVATION NETWORK (I-WIN)

Helping employers, educators, and students leverage innovative models for scaling high-quality work-based learning opportunities in school districts and community colleges across the State

The Launch
Education Systems Center of Northern Illinois University convened I-WIN in October 2020 in response to the challenges educators faced in designing work-based learning (WBL) opportunities for remote learning during the global COVID-19 pandemic and growing awareness of the racial inequities in our systems and communities. A primary focus of I-WIN is to amplify WBL models that demonstrate potential for connecting students with limited social capital to employers.

I-WIN is serving more than 50 schools representing 420 or more students in its inaugural year.

The Initiative
Open to communities throughout Illinois, I-WIN participants receive professional development opportunities and regular community of practice sessions to support and inspire their virtual work-based learning practices. Participants:

• Engage in peer-to-peer conversations.
• Receive technical assistance including help in designing student projects and supporting employer onboarding.

Best practices, learnings, and resources gathered during I-WIN communities of practices are made available through the resource hub and will inform future recommendations to State policymakers.

Select I-WIN communities are also piloting implementation of Practera, an online learning platform that supports entirely virtual or hybrid work-based learning experiences. Access to the Practera platform is being provided to participating sites at no cost during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years, thanks to our partnerships with Practera and cooperative education and experiential learning leader Northeastern University (Boston), with funding by the National Science Foundation.

To join the Network, contact Heather Penczak, Policy & Program Manager, at hpenczak@niu.edu