

TRANSPORTATION, WAREHOUSING AND LOGISTICS WORKFORCE

A Job Market in Motion





The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago

- Chicago Workforce Board
- Cook County Workforce Investment Board
- DuPage Workforce Board
- Grundy Livingston Kankakee Workforce Board
- Lake County Workforce Investment Board
- McHenry County Workforce Investment Board
- River Valley Workforce Investment Board
- The Workforce Board of Northern Cook County
- Workforce Investment Board of Will County

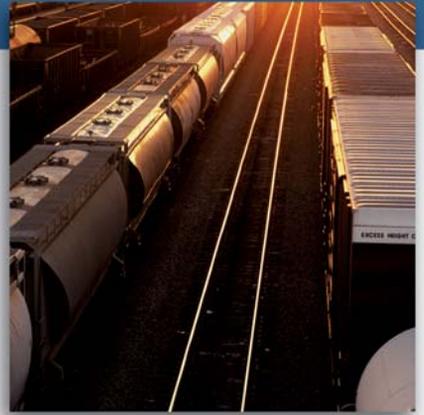
An Unprecedented Collaboration

The intelligence gathered and initiatives currently underway are the result of a regional collaboration that is unprecedented. Engaging this large and diverse industry was not easy. Unlike the other two industries addressed through CSSI (i.e., healthcare and manufacturing), Transportation, Warehousing, and Logistics (TWL) firms do not see themselves as a single industry and do not have a single trade or professional association that represents the entire industry. Rather, there are a number of associations that work to advance more specific sets of interests. As such, the TWL industry has little experience in working as a single body to address public policy issues and has limited knowledge of workforce issues, either the industry’s key challenges, or the public programs or labor market information and workforce trends in the Chicago region more generally.¹

The success of this process was dependent on regional stakeholders² and employers sharing their knowledge and experience. The Workforce Boards are grateful for the employer and stakeholder energy, enthusiasm and insight, and look forward to continuing to work with them to insure the Chicago region’s TWL industry is among the most competitive in the world.

¹ UPS is an important exception. “Brown” has been engaged with at least two of the Workforce Boards in the region and has a long history of participating in education and workforce policy and program issues.

² Regional stakeholders included professional and trade associations, labor unions, secondary and post secondary educational institutions, training providers, employment programs and staffing firms, community organizations and interest groups, local and state government, economic development professionals, and workforce professionals.

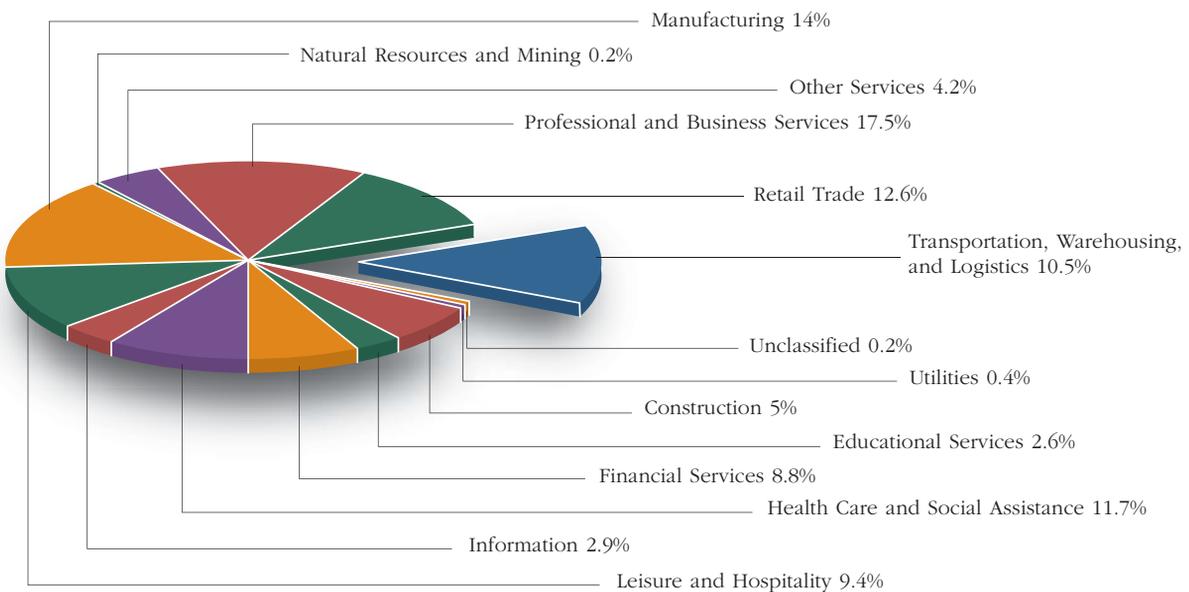


Transportation/Warehousing/Logistics Workforce: Careers With a Future

Few of us give it much thought. We simply expect our stores to be stocked and our packages to be delivered.

But did you know that in the metropolitan Chicago region³, more than 120,000 individuals are employed in the transportation/warehousing/logistics (TWL) industry workforce? In fact, TWL is the fifth largest employment sector in the region and continues to grow.⁴

2002 EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY



Due to the expanding global market and the cost saving use of just-in-time inventory management practices, the demand for material movement is rapidly growing, requiring a much larger workforce. At a time when downsizing and outsourcing are becoming standard practice in other sectors, the demand for qualified TWL workers remains robust and is predicted to grow by an average of 23% over the next decade.⁵

The fact of the matter is most TWL jobs are invisible to the general public. Which is surprising since they are diverse — in terms of education and skills required, career advancement opportunities, and wages — and increasing in number. But, because we as a public do not interact with them, we know little about them.

³ The metropolitan Chicago region includes the City of Chicago, and Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties.

⁴ Employment data for Northeast Economic Development Region, 2003 Quarter 1, provided by Illinois Department of Employment Security., Critical Skill Shortages Report for the Transportation, Warehousing and Logistics Sector for the Northeast Economic Development Region, June 2004, page 15.

⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004-2005, Career Guide to Industries. Based on employment of wage and salary workers in truck transportation and warehousing by occupation, 2002 and projected change, 2002-2012. <http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs021.htm>.



In the Chicago metropolitan area, 102 million sq. ft. of warehouse/ distribution space is currently under construction. These facilities will offer an array of employment opportunities for individuals interested in pursuing careers in supply chain management/logistics and distribution.

**Steven Husak
Executive Director
Kankakee County Economic
Development Association**

The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago (Workforce Boards) are a consortium of nine Workforce Boards that began working together several years ago, as a region, to address workforce issues. As a result of a comprehensive analysis the region's present and forecasted economic status and labor market, as published in the *2003 State of the Workforce Report for the Metropolitan Chicago Region*⁶, the Workforce Boards identified the TWL industry as one of six industries in the region to address through sector-based workforce strategies.

In March 2004, the Workforce Boards in cooperation with TWL industry representatives and associations convened the TWL Workforce Summit. The summit activities focused on identifying how the workforce development system could assist the industry in addressing their workforce challenges. In follow-up to the summit, the Workforce Boards, in partnership with the industry, continued to discuss and examine the industry's workforce needs as part of an initiative launched by Governor Blagojevich: Illinois' Critical Skill Shortages Initiative (CSSI)⁷. The CSSI was designed to:

- Assess the occupational and skill needs of industry sectors deemed critical to the region's economy;
- Identify critical workforce needs and challenges that threaten to undermine industries' competitiveness;
- Identify the reasons for these workforce shortfalls, both short- and long-term; and
- Involve employers and key industry associations, as well as other stakeholders, in the process of identifying and implementing solutions to these challenges.

This report highlights The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago's efforts to address the TWL workforce critical shortages in the Northeast Economic Development Region (NEDR)⁸. It is a snapshot of the workforce challenges facing the TWL industry in metropolitan Chicago and is not intended to be a comprehensive assessment of the industry or its needs. The report focuses on unfilled jobs, skill gaps, and related human resource and training issues. Additionally, the report includes solutions developed by the stakeholders in the NEDR, with support and leadership from the Workforce Boards, and a description of the initiatives funded under the CSSI.

⁶ A copy of the 2003 State of the Workforce Report for the Metropolitan Chicago Region can be found at www.workforceboardsmetrochicago.org.

⁷ The Critical Skill Shortages Initiative is supported with Workforce Investment Act funds administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. More information on this initiative is available at www.illinoisbiz.biz/wia2/CSSI.html.

⁸ While the Workforce Boards have defined the metropolitan region as including Livingston County, the Illinois Department of Commerce Economic Opportunity has defined the NEDR as not including Livingston County.



Understanding the Problem

The TWL industry is a collection of diverse subsectors that share "space" — they move goods from one place to another — but do not identify as a single industry. As an industry, TWL is critical to the economic health of the metropolitan Chicago region:

- The TWL industry is worth \$8 billion to the Chicago region; it employs over 120,000 people, and maintains a payroll in excess of \$3.2 billion.⁹
- The Chicago region's TWL industry handles more than half of all containers in the U.S. in any given year.⁹
- Chicago is the third-busiest intermodal hub in the world (next to Hong Kong and Singapore).⁹
- One-third of all U.S. rail freight flows through Chicago, the only U.S. city where all of the six largest North American rail companies meet.¹⁰
- During the second quarter of 2004, nearly 8 million square feet of warehouse/distribution space was completed in the Chicago area, up from 5.7 million square feet a year earlier; the area's total is about 480 million square feet.¹¹
- The TWL industry is growing at nearly four times the pace of the economy as a whole; volume increased 7.2%¹² in the first six-months of 2004.¹³

TWL SECTOR EMPLOYMENT DATA

Employment	2003 Q4 Employment	Average Monthly Wage
42 Wholesale Trade	233,526	\$5,274
423 Merchant Wholesalers, Durable	135,642	\$5,260
424 Merchant Wholesalers, Non-durable	77,421	\$5,065
425 Wholesale Electronic Markets & Agents & Brokers	19,488	\$6,239
48–49 Transportation and Warehousing	174,454	\$3,576
482/485 Rail, Transit & Ground Passenger Transportation	29,509	\$2,696
484 Truck Transportation	40,345	\$3,981
487 Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation	879	\$2,398
488 Support Activities for Transportation	20,640	\$3,938
492 Couriers and Messengers	13,443	\$3,152
493 Warehousing and Storage	29,300	\$2,904

⁹ These figures were generated by the Regional Economics Laboratory (REAL), a cooperative venture between the University of Illinois and the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) and the Critical Cargo project developed by Business Leaders for Transportation 2002.

¹⁰ Aging U.S. Rail Networks Stuck in a One-Track World, Financial Times, September, 13, 2004, p. 16.

¹¹ Crain's Chicago Business, October 4, 2004.

¹² Truckers Desperate for a Few Good Buddies, Financial Times, September 8, 2004, p. 21.

¹³ In the Chicago area, TWL infrastructure also continues to grow. For example, FedEx announced two new service centers in the Chicago region, one in Aurora, Illinois and the other in Fremont, Indiana; see Transport Topics, Newsbriefs, September 8, 2004.

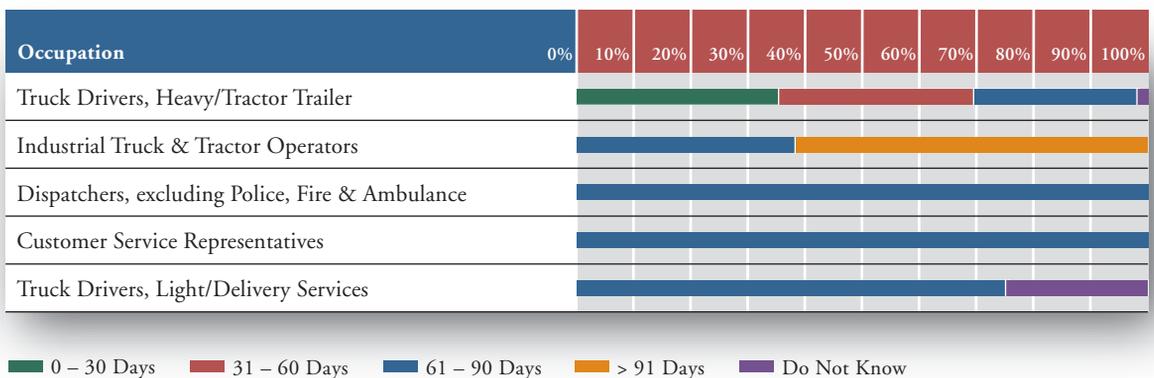


However, the industry does face serious skills shortages in a number of occupations within specific subsectors and across the industry, both short-term and long-term. The Workforce Boards in cooperation with public and private-sector stakeholders committed to the continued health and further development of this important industry, set out to determine “why” these skill shortages exist.

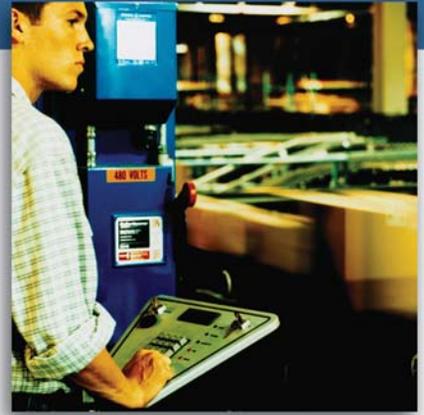
The framework for gathering baseline research for the purpose of identifying critical skill shortages in the metropolitan Chicago’s TWL industry, as well as the factors contributing to them and potential solutions, included the following:

- A national scan of literature defined workforce challenges and identified emerging strategies/practices to address them;
- Secondary data was compiled to provide a basis for analysis of the industry;
- Employer surveys, interviews, and focus groups determined critical hiring needs and related information such as hiring practices, duration of vacancies, qualifications required, and reasons for a lack of qualified job candidates.
- Surveys, interviews, and focus groups of current employees offered insights into occupational requirements and working conditions;
- Focus groups with high school students, community college students, and job seekers identified common perceptions and misperceptions associated with TWL careers;
- An inventory of producers provided a picture of regional and local capacity in training qualified workers for high-demand occupations;
- Career paths that would allow entry level employees to move into high-demand occupations were identified;
- The TWL Council was consulted for the purpose of validating research results and providing much-needed input; and
- Brainstorming sessions with representatives of the industry assisted with the identification of possible solutions.

DURATION OF VACANCY¹⁴



¹⁴ The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago: Job Vacancy Survey Final Report, prepared by the Economic Information and Analysis Division of the Illinois Department of Employment Security, May 2004, page 25. A total of 678 TWL employers were included in the survey sample; data is based on 388 respondents.



Critical Occupations: Defining the Demand

In the NEDR, eleven critical skill shortage occupations were identified for the TWL industry on which to focus regional efforts. These occupations were identified through a process that included the analysis of projected short-term and long-term growth in the metropolitan Chicago region, length and level of education required to attain needed skills and/or certifications for each occupation, and wage information.

Projected short-term and long-term shortages are reflected on the chart that follows. The demand is based on labor market projections that have been adjusted with supply data.¹⁵

DEMAND VS. SUPPLY

Occupation/Occupational Clusters	Demand ¹⁶	Supply Short Term	Supply Long Term	Estimated Shortage Short Term	Estimated Shortage Long Term
Administrative Support Cluster ¹⁷	4,573	121	0	4,452	4,573
Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technicians	297	263	104	34	193
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Braziers	754	77	215	677	539
Machinists	380	119	313	261	67
Transportation Cluster ¹⁸	4,749	1,854	0	2,895	4,749

Increasing Production of Skilled Workers: The Solutions

Further analysis of the region's skill shortages focused on the following questions: "Why aren't there enough workers for these jobs?" and "How do we turn the situation around?" Solutions identified for addressing the causes contributing to supply shortages are summarized as follows:

Improve the image of the transportation, warehousing and logistics industry.

Many employers expressed concern about both the image of their industry and the degree to which it lacks visibility. They feel few organizations and interest groups are working on their behalf or even treating their industry fairly relative to other industries. Career counselors, high school counselors, parents, and job-placement organizations were cited as intermediaries who market "either college or nearly every other career but the ones we offer" to job seekers, or refer the

¹⁵ For the purpose of projecting the supply of skilled workers for critical skill shortage occupations, complete data available through the Illinois Community College Board as well as the Critical Skills Shortages Initiative Inventory of Transportation, Warehousing, and Logistics Producers compiled by Thomas P. Miller & Associates, were used.

¹⁶ Demand – annual job openings 2000 to 2010 plus current vacancies

¹⁷ The Administrative Support Cluster includes: Computer Support Specialists, Customer Services Representatives, and Dispatchers, Excluding Police, Fire and Ambulance.

¹⁸ The Transportation Cluster includes: Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists; Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer; Truck Drivers, Light or Delivery Services; Locomotive Engineers; and Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators.



job seekers with no other choices to the industry — and they cannot hire most of them (e.g., security screens, background checks, credit checks, drug testing). There is a need to provide information that can help job seekers make choices — information about wages, for example, in combination with information about the realities of a life on the road, on board, or in a warehouse.¹⁹

Most individuals not currently working in the TWL industry do not have a strong opinion about the industry, but where they do hold opinions, these were generally negative:²⁰

- The TWL industry was not perceived as a technology-intensive industry;
- TWL jobs were perceived as unexciting and repetitive, demanding long hours and hard physical labor;
- TWL jobs were perceived as underpaid and lacking in benefits; and
- TWL jobs were perceived as “jobs you take while you look for a career elsewhere.”

Further probing made evident that negative impressions were a result of two interrelated dynamics:

- Incumbent workers tended to use a single job they held in low esteem (e.g., warehouse worker) as a proxy for the entire industry; and/or
- Youth and career changers had little direct experience with work in the TWL industry, but perceived it as work for uneducated or inexperienced people — people unlike themselves.²¹

EMPLOYEES EXPRESSED HIGH LEVELS OF JOB SATISFACTION²²

Individuals who...	0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
Seek to keep their current job						68%
Refer friends and family to open positions at their firm						74%
Want their next job to be with current employer						57%

Promote training and professional development.

There is a need to promote training and skill development among firms and employees in the TWL industry — both as a response to specific skill demands and as an effort to fill pervasive development gaps in key industry subsectors. The Chicago area is fortunate to have a significant network of education and training

¹⁹ Results of Employer Focus Groups, Interviews and Surveys in the Transportation, Warehousing & Logistics Industry, prepared for The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago by Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, June 2004, page 17.

²⁰ CSSI Awareness and Perception Focus Groups, prepared for The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago by Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, June 2004, pages 8 and 9.

²¹ There was one notable exception. One focus group was comprised of high school students that had visited—and some who had interned with—a major manufacturing and distribution center in Chicago. These students not only were more knowledgeable about TWL (and its relationship to manufacturing), but they perceived it as a field requiring high levels of skill, particularly technology skill, and held the industry in much higher esteem than any other group, youth or adult. CSSI Awareness and Perception Focus Groups, prepared for The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago by Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, June 2004.

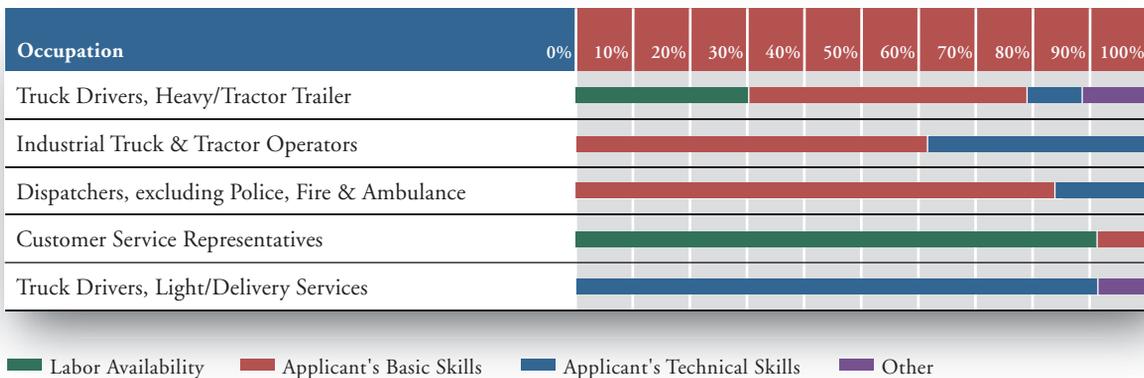
²² Results of Employee Surveys and Focus Groups in the Transportation, Warehousing & Logistics Industry, prepared for The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago by Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, June 2004, page 3.



providers developing talent for its firms, including those in the TWL industry. In fact, the metropolitan Chicago region offering some 62 programs that lead to the 9 of the 11 critical shortage occupations.²³ Capacity does not seem to be an issue with producers. Virtually none of the programs maintain waiting lists and most could accommodate more students than they currently have.²⁴

- Train job seekers and incumbent workers for skilled trades occupations in TWL firms.** Like firms in many other industries, TWL firms find it increasingly difficult to recruit qualified employees for skilled trades positions—machinists, mechanics, welders, etc. This solution focuses on recruiting and training among specific demographic groups including high school, college, and technical school students seeking to learn specific skills or trades; high school graduates who have 1-5 years of experience in low-wage jobs and are seeking better opportunities; entry-level TWL employees with aptitude and interest, but no formal training; and TWL employees with formal (or informal) training but no recognized credentials.

HIRING DIFFICULTIES²⁵



- Train employees in technology-intensive TWL occupations.** “Technology is changing the way work gets done and raising the skills requirements of the people who do it” is a common refrain across most industries. The integration of supply chains in the manufacturing sector has forced many trucking, intermodal, and warehousing firms to implement bar code readers and RFID tracking mechanisms so that not only their producers but also their customers can track merchandise online.²⁶ Homeland security and safety concerns are

²³ The only two occupations for which no regional training programs were identified were Dispatchers, Excluding Police, Fire and Ambulance and Locomotive Engineers. Critical Skill Shortages Initiative Inventory of Transportation, Warehousing, and Logistics Producers, prepared for The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago by Thomas P. Miller & Associates, November 2004.

²⁴ Critical Skill Shortages Initiative Inventory of Transportation, Warehousing, and Logistics Producers, prepared for The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago by Thomas P. Miller & Associates, November 2004.

²⁵ The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago: Job Vacancy Survey Final Report, prepared by the Economic Information and Analysis Division of the Illinois Department of Employment Security, May 2004, page 50. A total of 678 TWL employers were included in the survey sample; data is based on 388 respondents.

²⁶ For more information see Growth of Modern Logistics Industry Relies on Automation, Experts Say, Michael Malloy, Transportation Topics, September 6, 2004.



also impacting the adoption of new technologies across the industry.²⁷ The application of these technologies, diverse as they are, is raising the required skills levels among individuals whose jobs are impacted by these changes. This solution focuses on customized training for employees in technology-intensive occupations.

- **Promote training and professional development generally across the industry.**

Many firms participating in the CSSI project indicated that they offered training, professional development, tuition reimbursement, or other tools to advance employees on the job, but that few employees took advantage of these programs. Employees, in turn, are often not aware of such programs or are fearful that asking for training would indicate to their supervisors that they were not qualified for their current jobs. This solution focuses on professional and trade associations and their members engaging in a concerted effort to promote training and encourage participation in associations and networks.

The Chicago Metropolitan area is the transportation hub of the nation. A ready supply of qualified employees keeps this industry on the move and expanding. This initiative will help maintain and improve the steady flow of materials from our region to the rest of the world.

Michael Johl
Community Services Manager
UPS

- **Convene Transportation Boot Camp for incumbent workers.** Because so many TWL employees enter the industry through part-time positions or in narrowly prescribed jobs (warehouse forklift driver, for example), they are rarely exposed to the depth and breadth of the TWL industry as a whole. In turn, they are not aware of the range of job and career opportunities available in this diverse sector. An industry-wide "boot-camp" for entry-level TWL employees will fill this void. In addition to generating immediate and discernable benefits (e.g., employees who are better prepared for their jobs), less tangible benefits were also identified. For example, once employees understand their roles in relation to different parts of the sector, they begin to think of themselves as the professionals they are increasingly expected to be. Their jobs are no longer about simply storing and moving goods, but about safeguarding the nation's produce and products, and protecting the welfare of consumers who will ultimately purchase them in communities all over the world.

Advance strategic initiatives.

Innovative, strategic solutions are needed to support the development of skilled workers for critical skill shortages.

- **Recruit women into TWL jobs/careers.** Employers noted a need to find ways to recruit more diverse workers. While racial diversity has been a characteristic of

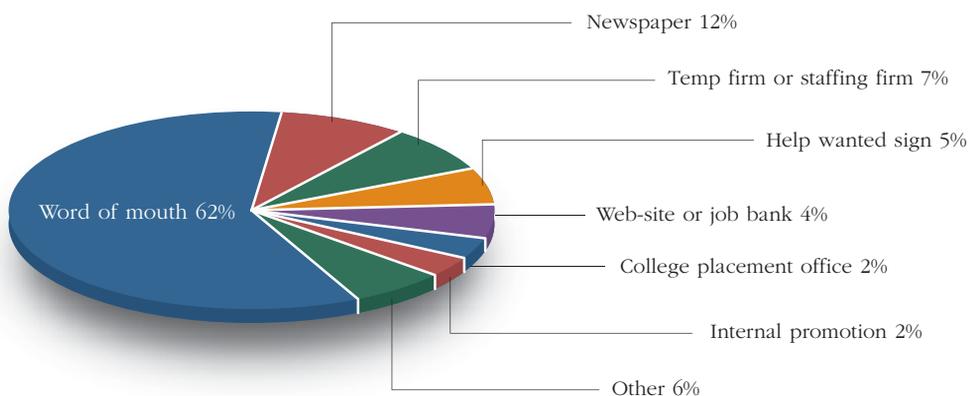
²⁷ Safety Technology is Getting Serious, Transportation Topics, September 6, 2004.

the industry for some time, at least among entry and mid-level employees, firms reported having had less success in promoting diverse employees to higher-level positions, or in attracting women for positions other than office work.²⁸ This may be reflective of the physically demanding working conditions required by many of the TWL job classifications, especially in the areas of operations and maintenance. However, as particular subsectors have come to place more importance on relationship management, customer service and communication, targeted efforts to recruit women may be more effective.



- Improving the industry's use of the internet.** In many one-on-one conversations, employees expressed difficulty knowing where to go for help in identifying their next job or career steps. For example, less than one in five thought that a boss or colleague would let them know about a promotion opportunity within their firm — many reported learning of openings from signs in front of their buildings rather than through internal communication.²⁹ The internet is a powerful tool for sharing information about specific stakeholder groups and recruiting talent for jobs and careers. While many associations and firms maintain job-boards or other electronic recruiting tools, there are a number of problems with these tools (e.g., insider terminology, passive message, outdated, incomplete information, privacy policies, etc.) — making them ineffective.

HOW EMPLOYEES FOUND THEIR JOB³⁰



²⁸ Results of Employer Focus Groups, Interviews and Surveys in the Transportation, Warehousing & Logistics Industry, prepared for The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago by Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, June 2004, page 19.

²⁹ Root Causes for Critical Skill Shortages in Transportation, Warehousing and Logistics, prepared for The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago by Transportation Consulting Services Corporation with assistance from the Hudson Institute Center for Economic Competitiveness, July 2004, page 11.

³⁰ Results of Employee Surveys and Focus Groups in the Transportation, Warehousing & Logistics Industry, prepared for The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago by Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, June 2004, page 10.



Addressing the Workforce Challenge

In the metropolitan Chicago region, over \$1.3 million in Governor's Reserve Workforce Investment Act funds is being invested to implement creative solutions aimed at addressing the TWL industry's workforce needs. An additional investment of \$2.1 million in leveraged and redirected resources, consisting of both public and private funds, are committed to these initiatives.

The solutions — or demonstration projects — will be administered during the coming two years. While the projects will have only a modest short-term impact on the industry's skill shortages, a significant impact will be achieved in the long-term through replication and expansion of successful practices and programs. The projects will also serve as a catalyst for increased collaboration of the workforce preparation system and the TWL industry.

Business and Career Services Inc., the northwest suburban one-stop center partnership, in collaboration with the Greater O'Hare Association of Industry and Commerce, the International Business Center, William Rainey Harper College, economic development partners, and employers, will address the training needs of the area's large freight forwarding industry located in the O'Hare International Airport metro Chicago corridor. The focus of this project is the delivery of training solutions that will result in the placement and/or advancement of individuals into high skilled positions within a broad category of customer service occupations.

DuPage County Workforce Development Division will assist job seekers in completing training, acquiring credentials/licensures, and obtaining employment in truck driving occupations.

Greater West Town Community Development Project, in partnership with employers, will provide individuals with training through its Shipping and Receiving Training Program. The program addresses workplace safety, warehouse operations, computerized shipping and tracking, inventory control and forklift operations. Individuals will acquire skills that prepares them for employment as customer service representatives, computer support specialists, and industrial truck and tractor operators.

Joliet Junior College's Institute of Economic Technology, in partnership with economic development partners, will provide individuals with electrical/electronic technician, welding, machine tool technology, forklift operator, and/or

radio frequency identification technology training. Training will be offered to incumbent workers and job seekers, with an emphasis on the recruitment of women into training.

National Able Network will administer a training program that will produce a trained pool of CDL-certified drivers for employers in the Chicago area. The program includes a comprehensive assessment of candidates and strategies to address barriers that threaten successful completion of CDL training.

Northeast Community College Consortium, a partnership of Moraine Valley Community College, South Suburban College, and Prairie State College, will administer two projects. Utilizing capacity that exists at three area colleges, dislocated workers will be trained for and obtain employment in truck driver, mechanic, machinist, computer support specialist, and welder/cutter/solderer/brazier occupations. Additionally, customized training will be offered to entry-level employees working at TWL firms in the south and southwest area of suburban Cook County to support advancement into targeted skilled trade occupations.

Olive-Harvey College will administer a bridge program that will include exposure to TWL career information, contextualized basic skills development, and occupational training. Additionally, through cohort classes, incumbent workers and job seekers will be offered increased opportunities to advance/obtain employment as diesel mechanics, locomotive engineers, dispatchers, electric and electronic technicians, and truck/bus drivers with the public transit and trucking firms.

Richard J. Daley College will initiate a program that focuses on preparation for employment in entry-level distribution/operations jobs (e.g., customer service representative and dispatchers) and mid-level machinist and mechanic jobs. The project includes four-week internships with participating employers. Target population includes bilingual Latinos.

Workforce Services Division of Will County, through a partnership with Joliet Job Corps and Joliet Junior College, will create capacity to produce forklift operators for Will County employers. The program will include forklift instruction and work readiness training.



The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) is proud to partner with City College of Chicago in developing the skills of our future workers. It is the responsibility of all employers to work cooperatively with the education system in providing students with access to current equipment and defining the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in our workplace.

**Dennis Cristofaro, Manager
Bus Maintenance
Training and Development
Chicago Transit Authority**



United Parcel Service will utilize a combination of both classroom and on-the-job training to increase employee knowledge of both computer and systems technology. This training will result in the advancement of incumbent workers.

Additional regional initiatives addressing the critical skill shortages in the TWL industry include:

- **Going Places: Careers in Transportation and Logistics:** This region-wide TWL event, convened November 8, 2005, focused on increasing community college and workforce development career counselors' awareness and understanding of TWL career opportunities, encouraging the incorporation of TWL related material into existing curricula, and understanding how to work effectively with employers in addressing their workforce needs.
- **TWL Career Exposure/Preparation:** The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago will make funds available to support costs associated with implementation of a program that is designed to share information regarding career and educational/training opportunities in the TWL industry and establish a framework to support increased/accelerated career preparation through the region's community college system.
- **Retaining and Recruiting Mature Workers:** During 2006, a conference will be conducted for employers to heighten awareness about the aging workforce and share best practices related to the retention and recruitment of mature workers.

Conclusion

The free exchange of information and open, honest discussion have resulted in creative, innovative partnerships that will go a long way toward addressing the shortages in the TWL workforce. Each project will be evaluated to identify practices that are worthy of continuation and replication. The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago are excited to be part of a system that will bring quality employees to employers and expand the career opportunities available to the region's current and future workforce.

For more information on research conducted by The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago and activities undertaken in cooperation with the TWL industry to address its workforce challenges, please visit www.workforceboardsmetrochicago.com.

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is credited with providing the policy framework and funding to catalyze innovative public/private partnerships designed to equalize the supply and demand for skilled workers. This publication was developed and printed with Workforce Investment Act grant funds provided by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

For additional information regarding TWL solution projects, contact the Workforce Board in your area.

Chicago Workforce Board

Linda J. Kaiser
60 W. Randolph
Suite 200
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 553-4430

**McHenry County Workforce
Investment Board**

Carl Martens
500 Russel Court
Woodstock, IL 60098
(815) 338-7100

**Cook County Workforce
Investment Board
(South and West Suburban Cook County)**

Anne Hogan
69 W. Washington Street
Suite 2860
Chicago, IL 60602
(312) 603-0203

**River Valley Workforce
Investment Board
(DeKalb, Kane and Kendall Counties)**

Pamela Fettes
2 Smoke Tree Plaza
North Aurora, IL 60542
(630) 844-6640

DuPage Workforce Board
Mary Beth Marshall
837 S. Westmore/Meyers Road
Suite B1
Lombard, IL 60148
(630) 495-4345

**The Workforce Board of
Northern Cook County
(North and Northwest Suburban
Cook County)**
Mary Pepperl
2604 E. Dempster Street
Suite 502
Park Ridge, IL 60068
(847) 699-9195

**Grundy Livingston Kankakee
Workforce Board**
Elisabeth Dunbar
101 South Schuyler Avenue
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 935-0074

**Workforce Investment
Board of Will County**
Pat Fera
57 N. Ottawa Street
Suite 514
Joliet, IL 60432
(815) 727-5670

**Lake County Workforce
Investment Board**
Vickie Gordon
One N. Genesee Street
First Floor
Waukegan, IL 60085
(847) 377-2225



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