



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Illinois 60 by 2025 Network Is Now the Illinois Education and Career Success Network *Illinois' leading postsecondary attainment network announces new name*

CHICAGO — Today, the Illinois 60 by 25 Network is relaunching as the [Illinois Education and Career Success Network \(Success Network\)](#). The name change comes as Illinois is on track to meet certain goals in postsecondary attainment and continues to strive to meet the demand for specific supports to further advance equitable postsecondary access and attainment.

Nearly two-thirds of employers say they need employees with some postsecondary education. Data shows that currently, 55 percent of Illinois residents have a high-quality college degree or postsecondary credential (according to the [Lumina Foundation's Stronger Nation report](#)).

Back in 2009, the Illinois P-20 Council established a goal for Illinois to increase the number of adults with college degrees and high-quality postsecondary credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Following, numerous communities across Illinois launched local initiatives to increase postsecondary attainment; however, the State lacked the infrastructure to help support and align these efforts. In response, in 2013, [Advance Illinois, Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University \(EdSystems\)](#), and the [Illinois Student Assistance Commission \(ISAC\)](#) joined together to launch the Illinois 60 by 25 Network.

While Illinois has made significant progress since 2013 and is on track to reach 60 percent postsecondary attainment by 2025, postsecondary attainment outcomes remain inequitable across demographic groups. Considering that, the Illinois State legislature formally urged the State's P-20 Council to update the State's 60 by 25 goal to include equity-focused targets aimed at closing institutional racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps.

“Our new name reflects the continued demand we are seeing for the supports provided by our Network Organizers, and the impact attained when communities across Illinois align their efforts to increase meaningful and equitable postsecondary attainment,” says Network director Edith Njuguna. “Our mission and vision remain constant, and will continue into 2025 and beyond, so that all Illinoisans can realize educational, economic, and social success.”

The Success Network will continue serving as a powerful peer-to-peer learning system for Illinois communities to improve college and career readiness and postsecondary completion rates. To date, 18 Illinois communities have applied for and received the Network's Leadership Community designation. The Leadership Communities serve 273,234 public high school students representing 45 percent of the statewide population, which is more than the State of Wisconsin's entire public high school population. Data show that students in Leadership Communities are outperforming statewide averages for key college readiness markers. For example, since the State began reporting this data in 2013, enrollment in community college math remediation courses fell by 18.5 percentage points for Leadership Communities as compared to 11.7 statewide. Learn more about the work of the Success Network at ILSuccessNetwork.org.

“Leadership Communities are demonstrating to policymakers and other Illinois communities that we can reach our postsecondary attainment goal and improve not just the State’s data but the day-to-day lives of young people in Illinois and their families,” says Jonathan Furr, executive director of EdSystems. “As a Network Organizer, EdSystems is committed to leveraging the lessons learned in the Leadership Communities across all our efforts to align and improve education and workforce systems, to ensure more equitable opportunities are realized, the quality of life for Illinois residents increases, and the State’s economy grows.”

"The launch of the network's new name serves as an opportunity to renew our commitment to equity and the mission of the network," said Robin Steans, president of Advance Illinois. "We are making progress toward achieving our postsecondary attainment goal, and Advance Illinois is excited to work alongside other network organizers to prepare more adults for today's workforce."

“Through our involvement with the Network, we are able to facilitate meaningful conversations in communities that help breakdown silos of work and improve outcomes for students,” said Eric Zarnikow, executive director of ISAC. “Engaging communities to work together, in addition to our student and parent outreach and financial aid programs, is fundamental to ISAC’s efforts to help make education beyond high school accessible and affordable to all Illinois students. Moreover, the collective work of the members of the Network and Network Organizers is advancing the important interest of the state in building a workforce for the jobs of the future.”

The Success Network name was announced this morning at the opening plenary session of Equity First, the Network’s annual conference. View the announcement video at <https://youtu.be/Zi3yhlwg3-0>. The conference continues through March 3, 2022 and is free to attend and fully virtual. Learn more at ILSuccessNetwork.org.

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