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Promising Practice Brief **Jobs for Illinois Graduates**

Program Background

- Jobs for Illinois Graduates (JILG), a state affiliate member of the national organization Jobs for America's Graduates, is a not-for-profit corporation providing Illinois public high school students with the skills and motivation to stay in school, to graduate, and to move into successful careers and higher education. The program curriculum provides these students with the tools necessary to complete their high school education and provide them with the support, confidence and skills to improve their personal development and employability skills that will serve them in forging a successful future.
- JILG focuses its programs on disadvantaged students who demonstrate specific barriers to completing their high school education. Those barriers include educational/academic problems, cultural problems, socio-economic problems, and personal development problems.
- JILG partners with high schools throughout Illinois that wish to offer the JILG program to their students. As partners, these high schools commit to establishing a JILG Advisory Committee, which requires the participation of district teachers, guidance counselors, and administration personnel; and to hiring a Career Specialist to teach the curriculum.
- The Career Specialist works with approximately 35-40 students, establishing a one-on-one relationship with each student as a teacher, guidance counselor and mentor.
- JILG is funded through a grant provided by the Illinois State Board of Education.

Career Development Activity Highlights

- *For-Credit Curriculum* – A year-round, one-credit, experiential-based course that combines classroom work with student enrichment activities. In the classroom, the Career Specialist teaches core competencies and skill sets, such as personal skills, leadership skills, communication skills, job attainment skills, job success skills, and career development skills.
- *Illinois Career Association* – Each participating student becomes a member of the Illinois Career Association where they develop leadership skills, participate in social and civic activities, and organize community service learning projects.

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- *JILG Cares* – Each student is required to do a minimum of 10 hours of service learning a year. Students select their own community service project that they want to support and take on the responsibility of organizing all the details around the project.

Evidence of Success

- In its 10 years of operation JILG has served over 20,000 Illinois high school students throughout 300 communities within the state.
- According to JILG, only 71% of high school students graduate across the nation. The JILG program consistently graduates over 90% of its students, and 95% of all JILG students are working full-time, are enrolled full-time in post secondary education, or have a full time combination of the two.
- JILG uses an online national data management system to track competency attainment, employer contacts, and placements. Each JILG student is tracked for one year after high school and is contacted or visited by their Career Specialist each month to ensure that they are successful in their post-high school placement.
 - Some of the outcomes being tracked include:
 - *In Education*: Graduation Rate, Return to School Rate, Improvement in Attendance, Improvement in Behavior, Reduction in Suspensions, Improvement in Faculty and Administrative Support, Improvement in Basic Skills, Post Secondary Education Rate
 - *In Workforce Development*: Employment Rate, Positive Outcome Rate; Full-Time Jobs Rate; Average Wage; Employer Provided Benefits; Work-based Learning; Work Record
 - *Cost / Benefit analysis*: JILG says that the program costs approximately \$1,225 per student. It asserts that this cost is repaid in state taxes in about 14 months, even if the student is only working at minimum wage.

Reference

Jobs for Illinois Graduates website: <http://www.jilginc.org/index.php>