



JULIANA STRATTON
OFFICE OF LT. GOVERNOR



**ILLINOIS
AGRI-FOOD
ALLIANCE**

SUMMIT REPORT

The New and Future Workforce

The agriculture, food, and natural resources (AFNR) sector is the backbone of Illinois’ economy and supports a broad spectrum of careers—from hands-on labor to advanced, specialized roles. As digital innovation, technological advancement, environmental pressure, and consumer demand transform the sector at an unprecedented pace, building a skilled, diverse, and equitable workforce ecosystem across all communities and every job level is paramount.

On September 26-27, 2024, the Illinois Agri-Food Alliance (ILAFA) and the Office of Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton held a joint summit to drive cross-sector collaboration aimed at strengthening Illinois’ future agri-food talent pipeline. Through dynamic, interactive sessions, the convening provided a unique forum for attendees to explore key workforce needs, including reshaping public perceptions of agri-food careers, strengthening education-industry alliances for evolving skill needs, and advancing diversity and inclusion. Over 50 leaders representing 35 organizations across business, academia, government, and nonprofits participated. This report captures their collective insight and a shared vision for *The New and Future Workforce*.

Event supported by:



Event hosted by:

Objectives & Design

The Illinois Agri-Food Workforce Summit united diverse stakeholders – urban and rural farmers, nonprofit and community-based executives, industry professionals, college and university faculty, k-12 educators, and government representatives – to tackle systemic workforce issues. This event served as a significant step toward building a skilled, diverse, and equitable workforce capable of meeting the demands of a rapidly changing agri-food ecosystem. Key features of the summit included:

1. **Collaborative Dialogue Across Diverse Stakeholders:** Cross-sector attendees joined with a singular purpose: to identify and address pressing workforce development needs and explore actionable solutions.
2. **Expert Insights on Workforce Transformation:** Academic and industry panelists provided essential context on the changing workforce landscape, highlighting the impact of diversity, evolving job demands, and emerging opportunities within the agriculture, food, and natural resources (AFNR) sector.
3. **Identifying Trends and Drivers of Change:** Participants drew on personal and professional insights to explore trends shaping the future of AFNR, setting the stage for proactive workforce ideation.
4. **Creating a Unified Vision for Progress:** Through structured sessions, stakeholders began shaping a collective vision and framework to advance workforce development and education.
5. **Strategic Networking Across the AFNR Value Chain:** Attendees had the unique opportunity to connect with various professionals and leaders across the AFNR ecosystem, fostering connections that will drive future collaboration and innovation.

Distinguished Speakers



Sanah Baig

Deputy Undersecretary for Research, Education, and Economics, USDA



Mark C. White, Ph.D.

Clinical Associate Professor, University of Illinois (UIUC)



Mark Beckman

Director, Manufacturing Industry Solutions, Microsoft



Tom Welge

President and CEO, Gilster-Mary Lee Corp.



Tami Craig Schilling

Vice President, Agronomic Digital Innovation, Bayer Crop Science

Process Overview

The summit began with an overview of workforce trends and an expert panel discussion, providing a foundational understanding of Illinois' AFNR workforce landscape. Attendees then gathered in breakout groups to identify common challenges, potential solutions, and tangible actions across three priority themes:

Theme 1 – Reimagining Agri-Food: Shifting Perceptions to Attract the Next Generation

Theme 2 – Bridging the Gap: Building Stronger Education and Industry Alliances

Theme 3 – Cultivating Inclusion: Advancing Diversity and Equity in Agri-Food Workplaces

These themes, selected for their systemic relationship to Illinois' diverse agri-food system and need for cross-sector engagement, aimed to inspire collaborative solutions across a broad consortium of organizations.

Following group discussions, participants shared insights in a full-room report-out, capturing collective goals and actionable steps to collectively move forward to build and support Illinois' agri-food workforce pipeline.

Three Summit Themes

The following themes are condensed versions of prompts provided to attendees during the summit.

Theme 1 - Reimagining Agri-Food: Shifting Perceptions to Attract the Next Generation

The sector's future depends on reshaping public perceptions and inspiring the next generation to see the exciting, diverse opportunities in agri-food. From cutting-edge fields like food technology and precision agriculture to high-demand areas in sustainability and conservation, Illinois must spark awareness and interest to draw in talent from all backgrounds and geographies. This transformation will bridge the gap between today's youth and tomorrow's essential AFNR careers.

Theme 2 – Bridging the Gap: Building Stronger Education and Industry Alliances

Building a strong alliance between educational institutions and industry is essential to prepare a workforce ready for the challenges ahead. By aligning curricula with evolving industry needs, fostering hands-on learning, and creating direct pathways from classrooms to careers, Illinois can cultivate a continuous talent pipeline. Strategic collaboration among schools, colleges, and industry partners will drive real-world connections and build workforce-ready skills.

Theme 3 – Cultivating Inclusion: Advancing Diversity and Equity in Agri-Food Workplaces

For Illinois to lead the agri-food sector forward, equity and diversity must be woven into the industry's fabric. Expanding access to AFNR education, removing barriers to career pathways, and fostering workplace cultures that support all backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences will make the sector stronger, more resilient, and more innovative. By championing inclusion, Illinois can set the national standard for an agri-food industry that reflects and serves the diversity of its communities.

Model for Change Framework

The summit's breakout sessions employed a Model for Change framework designed to help stakeholders analyze current challenges, envision an ideal future, and define concrete steps for progress. This structured, three-phase discussion format facilitated collaboration and clarity around the three themes.

Phase 1: Case for Change – Developing a sense of *where are we now?*

Participants began by identifying key issues and interdependencies within each theme. This step encouraged groups to uncover common challenges and select one central issue to focus on collectively.

Phase 2: Vision for Change – Identifying *where do we want to be?*

Building on current programs and initiatives, participants envisioned an optimal state, discussing what could be achieved if resources aligned effectively and identifying potential barriers to progress.

Phase 3: Action for Change – Ideating *how do we get there?*

This phase focused on actionable strategies, highlighting collaborative needs, resource gaps, and immediate steps. The aim was to create a shared action plan that could drive forward Illinois' agri-food workforce development.

Each group presented a summary of their discussion, sharing one core challenge, an ideal vision, and at least one actionable next step. This process set a foundation for ongoing cross-sector collaboration and innovation across the agri-food ecosystem.

Key Insights

The following insights were developed based on the collective input during breakouts across all three themes as well as a post-summit questionnaire.

Case for Change (where are we now?)

The "Case for Change" phase identified key challenges within Illinois' agri-food workforce, including limited awareness of career opportunities, barriers for underrepresented communities, and misalignment between education and industry needs. The following are the predominant issues and barriers that emerged.

- 1. Limited Awareness of Career Diversity:** Many students, especially in urban areas, are unaware of the wide range of career opportunities in AFNR or show little interest due to limited exposure, accessibility challenges, and persistent misconceptions. For instance, agriculture is often viewed as predominantly farming, overshadowing the diverse roles that exist across the entire supply chain.
- 2. Barriers for Underrepresented Communities:** Historical disparities and lack of representation deter marginalized communities from pursuing agri-food careers. Many students do not see themselves represented in the industry due to limited role models and lack of relevant cultural opportunities within agricultural education.
- 3. Unclear Pathways and Education Misalignment:** Career pathways in the agri-food sector can be challenging to navigate. While most jobs in the sector do not require advanced degrees, there is a disproportionate emphasis on degree programs, leading students to overlook alternative, viable pathways. This lack of clarity and guidance discourages broader exploration of careers in the field.
- 4. Shortage of Qualified Educators:** The agri-food sector faces a shortage of certified agricultural educators, especially in urban areas. This shortage limits the ability to provide meaningful, informed education about the sector, hindering the development of a skilled and informed workforce.
- 5. Inconsistent Messaging:** The industry lacks a unified, coherent message to attract new talent, limiting its appeal and accessibility to diverse audiences.
- 6. Underutilized and Underfunded Programs:** Existing workforce programs and partnerships are often under-resourced and lack strategic connections, limiting their scalability and effectiveness in providing career exposure for students. Limited access to agriculture programs in urban and suburban areas further restricts pathways for diverse talent, underscoring the need for expanded support and innovative approaches.
- 7. Insufficient Industry-Education Connections:** Limited collaboration between K-12, higher education, and industry limits students' exposure to real-world job opportunities and skills needed in agri-food. Additionally, curricula often lack relatable content and flexible, hands-on learning experiences, such as internships and apprenticeships, that could effectively bridge students to future careers.
- 8. Resource and Financial Barriers:** Schools face financial and logistical limitations, including a need for systems, networks, and common metrics to successfully support agri-food education and sustain effective industry partnerships.
- 9. Recruitment, Retention, and DEI Challenges:** Traditional biases in recruiting and hiring, combined with limited workforce programs statewide, hinder the industry's ability to attract and retain a diverse workforce. Agriculture's slow pace in adopting inclusive practices and initiatives, in part due to 'DEI fatigue,' create additional barriers to meaningful progress.



- 10. Complex Workforce Needs and Work-Life Balance Challenges:** The rural location of many AFNR jobs, combined with demanding work schedules that are often seasonal, makes it difficult to meet modern job expectations and maintain work-life balance—often leading to burnout and limiting job accessibility.
- 11. Historical Trauma:** The agri-food industry carries a complex history, including a legacy of labor-intensive work and generational trauma experienced by marginalized populations, which impacts its modern appeal.

Vision for Change (where do we want to be?)

The collective “Vision for Change” phase focused on creating a dynamic and inclusive agri-food ecosystem that connects education, industry, and communities across Illinois, providing clear pathways to careers in agriculture, food, and natural resources (AFNR). Key visions expressed during breakout sessions included:

1. Developing **strong public-private partnerships** that enhance access to career opportunities, including internships, apprenticeships, mentorships, and employment pathways, while integrating hands-on learning into K-12, community colleges, and universities.
2. Creating a **diverse and adaptable agri-food workforce** that supports a thriving industry, offering high-quality, family-sustaining wages and opportunities for advancement. This vision positions food and agriculture as a critical driver of economic mobility, providing opportunities that strengthen communities statewide.
3. Being **forward-thinking** by anticipating the evolving needs of the future workforce and supporting collaboration across sectors to equip youth with the skills needed to excel in a rapidly changing economic landscape. This ensures the agri-food sector meets the demands of both today and tomorrow.
4. Promoting **inclusivity and equity**, ensuring all Illinoisans—urban and rural—benefit from a connected workforce. By fostering cross-sector collaboration between industry, education, government, and community, this vision seeks to break down silos and create a sustainable, integrated ecosystem that prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.
5. Expanding **public awareness and positive perception** of agri-food careers to include not just agriculture production, but the entire agri-food system—from logistics to sustainability and technology. This holistic view aims to include positive perceptions of diverse career opportunities critical to Illinois' economic future and global sustainability.



Actionable strategies, supported by strong industry partnerships, will be essential to bringing these comprehensive visions to life and ensuring long-term investment in the agri-food workforce, positioning Illinois as a leader in developing the next generation of agri-food professionals.

Action for Change (how do we get there?)

The "Action for Change" phase focused on defining concrete steps to implement this vision. Key strategies included enhancing public-private partnerships, improving career awareness, creating clear pathways from education to industry, and fostering inclusive hiring practices. The following actionable steps emerged as critical to driving progress and building a more inclusive, skilled, equitable agri-food workforce in Illinois.

1. Advance Next Generation Career Awareness

- **Establish Regional Partnerships:** Establish regional partnerships to bolster AFNR career awareness across all disciplines and age groups. For example, urban school district leadership should be approached to

explore pathways for integrating AFNR programs in cities, aiming to expand AFNR curriculum and career exploration programs in schools across the state.

- **Support Flexible, Inclusive Programs:** Support flexible partnerships with non-traditional AFNR efforts. For example, Pilot Light and JJK FAN provide programming tailored to diverse student interests and needs beyond conventional school-based curricula.
- **Broaden Youth Organization Engagement:** Collaborate with traditional AFNR-focused groups (e.g., FFA, 4-H, MANNRS) and expand into other youth programs to bridge awareness gaps, ensuring more youth are reached with AFNR career insights.
- **Promotion of Agri-Food Career Opportunities:** Highlight high-demand agri-food careers through school and community initiatives, helping youth see the industry as a viable, attractive option for their futures. This should include highlighting the value of agri-food careers through open dialogues, hands-on learning, and meaningful experiences that go beyond traditional career fairs.

PILOT LIGHT

Pilot Light is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering children to make healthier choices by integrating food education into classroom learning. Founded by chefs and educators, Pilot Light creates curriculum and resources that blend food

knowledge with traditional subjects, helping students understand the impact of food on their bodies, communities, and environment. Through engaging lessons and hands-on activities, Pilot Light encourages critical thinking and fosters lifelong, healthy eating habits, aiming to make food education a fundamental part of learning and inspiring the next generation to embrace food's role in their lives and society. See more at <https://pilotlightchefs.org/>.



The Jackie Joyner-Kersey (JJK) Food, Agriculture, Nutrition (FAN) Innovation Center is a unique collaboration between the JJK Foundation, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center and Lansdowne UP. Each organization provides assets that together amplify our ability to provide educational and professional development programming in agriculture, STEAM, food innovation, nutrition, physical activity, and entrepreneurialism to youth and community in East St.

Louis and beyond. Staff from each organization are housed on-site and work together to deliver curriculum and trainings for participants of all ages. See more at <https://www.jjkfan.org/>.

The AGNITOR

AGNITOR is a pioneering initiative of the Illinois Agri-Food Alliance designed to ignite student interest about career opportunities across Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR). Through a blend of live streaming, in-

person events, and community outreach, AGNITOR bridges students with real-world industry experiences, offering a direct look into diverse AFNR careers. Partnering with schools, after-school programs, and community organizations, AGNITOR cultivates awareness and passion for these fields, especially among underrepresented groups. The program seeks to build a future workforce that's innovative, inclusive, and equipped to advance sustainable solutions for food and natural resource systems in Illinois and beyond. See more at <https://agnitor.org/>.



Illinois Ag in the Classroom (IAITC) is a statewide program focused on enhancing agricultural literacy among Illinois students and educators. Through free, standards-aligned resources and interactive lessons, IAITC connects students with the essential role of agriculture in daily life. As part

of a nation-wide program, IAITC brings the science, technology, history, and importance of agriculture into classrooms, connecting students with the industry that sustains them. Working in conjunction with the IAA Foundation, the program serves more than 600,000 students and 40,000 teachers at the local level each year. See more at <https://www.agintheclassroom.org/>.

- **Share Career Journeys:** Develop a speaker’s bureau to facilitate interactions between students and industry professionals, enabling students to hear real-world experiences directly from experts in various agri-food fields. The AGNITOR program is a new pilot program in Chicago creating these experiences that could be expanded statewide. Illinois Ag in the Classroom also engages K-12 education across the state to increase ag literacy and share standards-based, cross-curricular lessons.
- **Develop Targeted Marketing Campaigns:** Initiate a regional or national marketing campaign, possibly through public-private partnerships, focusing on the innovative aspects of the AFNR sector such as AI, robotics, biotech, and sustainability to engage students and align with their interests in technology and environmental impact.
- **Leverage Digital Outreach:** Leverage social media channels popular with youth to reach students early, showing them a range of career pathways and sharing content on agri-food industry innovations, community events, and scholarship programs.
- **Ensure Inclusive Messaging:** It is important that career messaging be cognizant of the cultural stigma and generational trauma certain groups embody, making them hesitant to pursue careers in AFNR.

2. Build Education-Industry Alignment

- **Integrate AFNR Education Across All Learning Stages:** Establish general AFNR education as a core requirement in K-12, community college, and university curricula to ensure consistent exposure. Additionally, develop initiatives to create seamless transitions between these stages and into the workforce, supported by industry partnerships to enhance and extend AFNR programming.
- **Enhance Real-World Learning:** Implement small-scale, industry-sponsored learning opportunities like farm visits (“Classroom in the Combine,”) industry competitions, and job shadows to give students hands-on, experiential learning in agricultural settings, making AFNR careers more visible and accessible. Highlighting dates like Illinois Agriculture Day to coordinate these events would maximize impact.
- **Launch Exchange Programs:** Launch exchange programs for students across rural and urban backgrounds to build mutual understanding, share diverse perspectives, and explore AFNR career possibilities alongside industry.
- **Ensure Curriculum Relevance:** Work with employers to regularly update K-12 AFNR curricula to reflect emerging industry trends (e.g., digital technology, climate-smart practices) and provide clear information on workforce needs (e.g., skills, job types, required degrees) and integrate this information into school programs. Industry partners can support curriculum projects that integrate practical applications across subjects like math, science, and marketing, such as Gilster-Mary Lee’s “Create a Crunch” student contest.
- **Expand Pathways to Employment and Credentialing:** Increase opportunities for apprenticeships, mentorships, internships, and credentialing programs (including micro-credentials) in high-demand industry skills, enabling students to gain recognized qualifications that directly lead to employment. Focus on providing scholarship options for students from underserved communities to enhance access.
- **Support Teacher Recruitment Programs:** Create paid programs for teachers seeking Agricultural Education certification, and expand provisional licensing support for non-certified teachers, focusing on urban areas with the greatest need for AFNR education.



3. Support Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity, and Accessibility in Agri-Food

- **Implement Intentional and Inclusive Hiring:** Establish clear, skills-based hiring criteria that recognize diverse educational backgrounds and industry experiences.
- **Create a Culture of Belonging:** Foster a workplace culture where diversity is naturally integrated and valued, with intentional inclusion of marginalized groups, people with disabilities, and underrepresented demographics at all levels.
- **Develop Clear, Inclusive Job Descriptions:** Develop and communicate job descriptions that clearly outline the benefits and opportunities to attract a broad range of candidates, highlighting pathways for people with different skills and backgrounds.
- **Pathways for Skill-Building and Job Preparation:** Implement mentorship, post-hiring skill-building, and job training programs that equip employees with the skills needed to thrive and advance within inclusive, adaptable workplace environments and support both individual growth and industry needs.
- **Welcoming Communities Initiative:** Invest in local amenities and facilities that make agri-food careers more accessible and attractive, particularly for individuals with specific needs and from underrepresented backgrounds. This could include programs that offer accessible childcare and disability accommodations. Policies and programs that expand pathways for foreign-born workers also serve an important function in workforce development.
- **Partnerships with Community Organizations:** Collaborate with educators, community leaders, and local businesses to address barriers in job accessibility, working to provide transparent job pathways and level the playing field for all community members.



4. Build Public-Private Partnerships and Community Connections

- **Establish Ongoing Forums for Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Create forums for relevant parties to continue collaborating, sharing insights, and learning from one another to build connected workforce and education programming.
- **Promote Community Engagement:** Host events like community meals, garden programs, and parent-teacher conferences at industry locations to increase community exposure to the agri-food sector. Promote civic ambassador roles and community engagement initiatives that actively connect industry with local communities, including increasing student events in Chicago and the suburbs.
- **Ensure Inclusive Language and Programs:** Frame agri-food discussions in universally accessible language that emphasizes food's role in community and trust-building, aligning programming to emphasize how food connects people and the broader Illinois agri-food ecosystem.
- **Secure Funding Sources:** Seek funding from entities like the USDA and the Illinois State Board of Education to support public-private partnerships, enhancing program sustainability and expanding impact.

Next Steps for Illinois

To achieve these ambitious goals, public-private partnerships will play a pivotal role in shaping the future workforce pipeline. Employers, educational institutions, governmental agencies, community-based organizations, and other industry stakeholders must work in concert to fund curriculum development, create tailored pathway programs, and offer opportunities that give students early exposure to the full range of AFNR careers. These partnerships will be instrumental in ensuring that Illinois' agri-food sector becomes a national leader in workforce development—attracting young talent not just from within the state but from across the country, while making agri-food careers attractive, viable, and accessible for all.

The following emerged as important key questions to address and next steps for continued dialogue:

Key Questions:

1. How can job openings be made more transparent? Are there ways of identifying highly in-demand careers? Is there a need for a consolidated site with all relevant job opportunities?
2. How can colleges and universities best encourage students in non-AFNR related disciplines to seek career opportunities in the field?
3. How can industry effectively communicate that good paying jobs related to AFNR often don't require a degree or certification?
4. What roles do government, education, and industry have in rehabilitating the image created through generational trauma caused by the agricultural and food industries? How do we de-stigmatize the work?
5. How do we encourage rural migration? Is it a path to citizenship for agriculture workers? Greater work visa opportunities? Greater clarity of roles in urban and suburban communities?
6. What can we do to make our communities more welcoming? What can we do to ensure people want to plant roots?

Next Steps:

1. Continue fostering partnerships among summit stakeholders to align efforts and further refine ideas into a comprehensive vision and action plan.
2. Form exploratory committees or smaller working groups aimed at identifying achievable, short-term tasks.
3. Organize a Facebook group or email list-serve to support ongoing communication, collaboration, and idea sharing.
4. Expand insights and engagement by bringing in new groups to ensure industry-wide support. Encourage involvement at all levels of the agri-food system, from policy makers to local industry stakeholders.
5. Build capacity and secure resources to advance research analysis of industry trends and leverage current data and projections to guide future discussions.
6. Present summit ideas to key stakeholder groups like the IL General Assembly, IL Ag Legislative Roundtable, and Illinois Manufacturers Association.
7. Share summit takeaways with media outlets to facilitate public awareness.



Participating Stakeholders

Lucas Allen, *Ag Program Advisor*, Illinois Ag Education & FFA
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Derrick Baker, *Dean*, Career and Technical Education, Parkland College
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Eddy Rangel, *Student*, Olive-Harvey College
Emily Reyes, *Student*, Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences
Aniyah Smith, *Student*, Gary Comer Youth Center

Summit Agenda

- 8:00am Registration and Morning Networking
- 8:30am Welcome Remarks
- 8:35am Opening Announcements & Introductions
- 8:45am *Navigating the Agri-Food Workforce Landscape*
Mark White, *Clinical Associate Professor, University of Illinois College of ACES; Interim Assistant Dean and Program Leader, Community and Economic Development, Illinois Extension*
- 9:00am *The Workforce Frontier: Industry Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities*
Mark Beckmann, *Director, Manufacturing Industry Solutions, Microsoft*
Tami Craig Schilling, *Vice President, Agronomic Digital Innovation, Bayer Crop Science*
Tom Welge, *President and CEO, Gilster-Mary Lee Corp.*
- Moderated by: **Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton**
- 9:30am Theme 1 Breakout – *Reimagining Agri-Food: Shifting Perceptions to Attract the Next Generation*
- 10:45am PAUSE
- 11:00am Theme 2 Breakout – *Bridging the Gap: Building Stronger Education and Industry Alliances*
- 12:30pm LUNCH
- 1:00pm Luncheon Keynote
Sanah Baig, *Deputy Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics, United States Department of Agriculture*
- 1:30pm Theme 3 Breakout – *Cultivating Inclusion: Advancing Diversity and Equity in Agri-Food Workplaces*
- 3:00pm PAUSE
- 3:15pm Future Visioning Exercise
- 3:55pm Concluding Thoughts
- 4:00pm Summit Close



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ABOUT THE ILLINOIS AGRI-FOOD ALLIANCE

The Illinois Agri-Food Alliance (ILAFA) is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the sustainability of Illinois' agri-food ecosystem by connecting talent, catalyzing ideas, and championing solutions to complex, systemic challenges. Via a unified, non-partisan platform, we help diverse stakeholders align cross-sector strategic priorities, spark innovation,

improve coordination, catalyze growth, increase visibility, and build trust – ingredients essential to driving forward-thinking solutions that address the 21st century economic, environmental, and societal challenges of today and tomorrow. The Illinois Agri-Food Alliance is a project of Global Philanthropy Partnership, a 501(c)3 fiscal sponsor.



JULIANA STRATTON
OFFICE OF LT. GOVERNOR

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF ILLINOIS

Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton proudly represents all Illinoisans with compassion and empathy. She is a highly qualified, experienced advocate for women's rights, civil rights, and restorative justice. Since taking office, Lieutenant Governor Stratton has cultivated a diverse portfolio of both statutory responsibilities and independent priorities, including the Illinois Council on Women and Girls, Governor's Rural Affairs Council, Rivers of Illinois Coordinating Council, We Thrive Initiative, and the well-known #AgConnectsUsAll Initiative. She actively brings people together and takes a community-centered approach to solving problems. Lieutenant Governor Stratton firmly believes that the solutions to Illinois' most pressing challenges can be found by tapping into the wisdom that already exists in our communities.