

2023 University of Illinois System Leadership State Tour

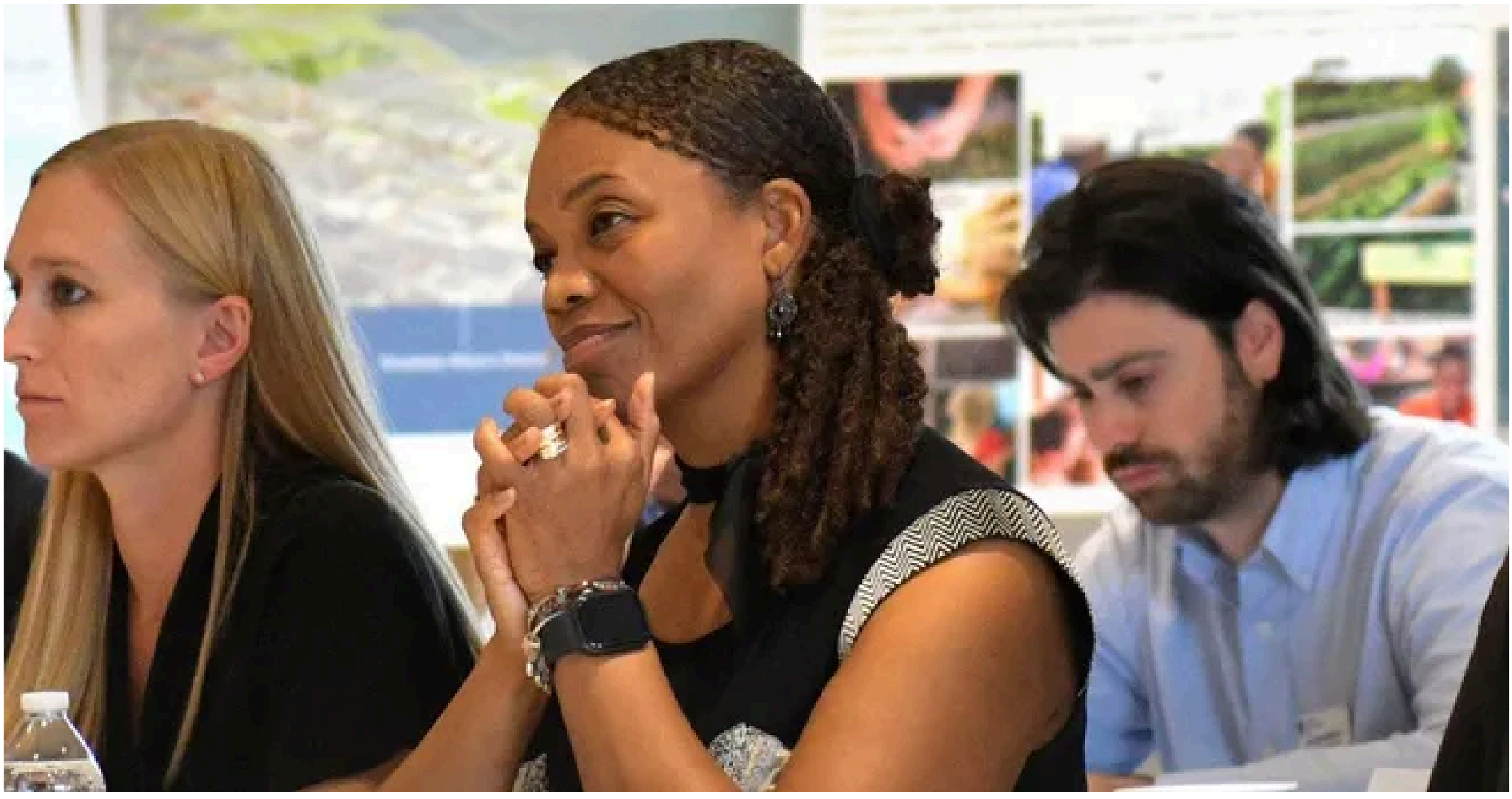
From workforce development to enhancing rural healthcare, expanding broadband internet access to recruiting more underrepresented students, the University of Illinois System addresses real-world challenges to further bolster the state's social, cultural and economic viability. Along with myriad partners, we're honored to be serving the public good every day.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SYSTEM

The University of Illinois System is the flagship higher education system in the state of Illinois.

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STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

From jobs to innovation to meeting local and regional needs, companies large and small are essential to the state's economic power. Through our partnerships — and by equipping learners of all ages to fill critical workforce needs — we're leveraging the system's resources to ensure companies and communities succeed.

Transforming futures for communities, residents

By digging in on economic and workforce development opportunities, the University of Illinois System plays an active role in strengthening communities across the state to secure brighter, more prosperous futures.

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, a key partner in the U of I System-led Illinois Innovation Network, is helping revitalize Alton's downtown.

"Wedge Innovation Center is incredibly intriguing in its possibilities in part because of the partnership with Southern Illinois University Edwardsville that helps drive it. This is the kind of partnership that melds the best of government with public higher education and private enterprise," U of I System President Tim Killeen said.

What's next: Partner on geospatial assessment, workforce development, and grant writing. Consider expansion of local government leadership programs through Illinois Extension and the system's Institute of Government and Public Affairs.





Advancing technology through transportation

Training the next generation to work on technologically complex vehicles and alternative energy solutions is the focus at the Southern Illinois University Carbondale Transportation Education Center.

“It’s exciting to be part of the progression of autonomous technology, where lasers are calibrating lasers," said Andrew Croxell, interim director of the School of Automotive Technology at SIUC. “We’re trying to anticipate and plan for the high-skill, high-income jobs of the future.”

SIUC is an essential part of the system-led Illinois Innovation Network.

What’s next: Help make essential connections. Connect transportation center officials with the autonomous testing track at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Connect SIUC with biofuel research at our universities and through the Illinois Innovation Network. Explore connections with Prairie Research Institute and electric vehicle manufacturing partners.

Partnering for growth in the Quad Cities

In Illinois, we build things. And the Quad Cities builds many things.

Our state tour delegation listened to and learned from some of the region's leading manufacturers and organizations, with all parties looking to identify ways to grow advanced manufacturing opportunities in the Quad Cities and in Illinois.

Jarred Pauwels, John Deere vice president, emphasized a key part of our role: “The University of Illinois System is an important partner in acquiring new talent across many different disciplines.”

Continued strong partnerships with John Deere, Western Illinois University, Metro IL Quad Cities, Rock Island Arsenal and Rock Island Arsenal Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center will lift all boats on the economic tide.

What’s next: Strengthen our relationships in the Quad Cities area, and cultivate our talent pipeline to northwest Illinois, with the shared goal of growing the area's advanced manufacturing economy.





Fueling entrepreneurial ecosystems

Deeply ingrained in the Peoria area, the University of Illinois Springfield serves as a conduit for bringing to life small- and large-scale innovations that lead to economic growth.

“The (system-led) Illinois Innovation Network is the most important resource we have,” said Robert Kerr, executive director of innovation and opportunity at the new UIS Innovation Center. “When you’re part of a network that’s working together, not competing, you have peers you can reach out to for great ideas, and as entrepreneurs you don’t have to reinvent the wheel. The partnerships we’ve been exposed to because of the IIN have been incredible.”

What’s next: Work with Bradley University and Illinois Central College to continue to frame the Peoria-Decatur-Springfield area as a prime location for business development. Connect Bradley’s Turner School of Entrepreneurship and Innovation with UIUC and UIS programs.

Closing equity gaps through internet access

Partnering to correct broadband inequities is a shining example of what the state tour is all about.

Illinois Broadband Lab (IBL) collected feedback about high-speed internet access across the state, spotlighting challenges and opportunities for businesses, non-profits, communities, farmers, students, and more.

“We have to understand these are human beings trying to enhance, survive and thrive,” said Aneta Thomas Lee, assistant director for digital equity, inclusion, and navigation at IBL. "As much change as we will see in the next five to 10 years, this is a gap we will continue to have to mind. That said, in Illinois we are poised to do that better than anyone."

What’s next: Explore what Broadband READY-type work could happen at the system. Spread the word about obtaining — and using — the $30-per-month broadband access subsidy.

Real Impact: Reaping rural benefits





WELLNESS FOR OUR WORLD

With a firm focus on healthcare quality, equity, and innovation, the University of Illinois System works to continually improve the health and wellness of the people of Illinois. Turning research into action plays a key role in human health and the health of our communities and our planet.

Rural healthcare solutions

With partners across the state, the U of I System helps drive efficient and effective healthcare delivery. System leaders, healthcare experts, and community advocates explored the roles artificial intelligence can and should play during an impassioned roundtable in Cuba in Fulton County.

“In rural Illinois, there aren’t enough (obstetricians), not enough people to deliver cancer care. One of the most important ways AI and machine learning can improve lives is through healthcare,” said Mark Rosenblatt, executive dean of the University of Illinois College of Medicine and interim CEO of University of Illinois Hospital. “Many disciplines are required to solve these problems, but we have the combined expertise to do it, to use the insight we gain to drive improved care for patients."

What’s next: Partner with our universities to gain better understanding of rural opportunities through enhanced analysis of aggregated and de-personalized UI Health data. Plus, continue this important conversation to maintain momentum.





A roadmap for rural health

The system is committed to bolstering rural healthcare across the state via programs like the Dixon Rural Training Track. Resident doctors split their time between Rockford and Dixon for their first year and complete their next two years' core rotations at KSB Hospital.

Our University of Illinois College of Medicine Rockford and KSB partnership helps improve the quality of healthcare for communities and families in the Dixon area.

System President Tim Killeen said the exciting challenge is to build more programs across the state using Dixon as the template to advance rural healthcare and reduce health inequalities.

What's next: Identify additional opportunities for partnerships among UI Health, Illinois Extension, and Dixon-area hospitals, and create a blueprint for improving rural healthcare that can be implemented in other rural Illinois areas.



Protecting our natural resources

The U of I System places great value on connecting natural resources and a region's ability to thrive. Havana puts environmental expertise and legislative policy to work in all the best ways, serving as a model for other communities.

Forbes Biological Station and the Illinois River Biological Station represent our system so well in this region. Run by Prairie Research Institute at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, the sites monitor and share expertise on waterfowl in the wetlands ecosystem and large fish in Illinois rivers, respectively. The information benefits hunting- and fishing-related businesses and tourism in the region.

What's next: PRI's long-term impact on Illinois — including on graduates of the system's universities who now work there — serves as a source of pride. Sharing its many stories will help even more people across the state see and appreciate hands-on research that changes lives and communities.



PREPARING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

We're committed to increasing opportunities for all who seek higher education, from high school students deciding on their next steps to transfer students joining us on their educational journeys. The University of Illinois System is eager to welcome ambitious learners to our world-class universities.

Opening pathways for transfer students

We're committed to making the transfer process seamless and easy for Illinois community college students. Elgin Community College knows transfers. It's long been a top conduit for students transferring into our three universities because of our solid partnership.

"Back when I was an ECC transfer student, it wasn't as streamlined," said Illinois Senator Cristina Castro, stressing how essential starting the path to a degree at a community college is for keeping student debt manageable. "So how do we help students seamlessly transfer into our state university programs? These two institutions are doing it incredibly well. We need to tout that across the state."

As part of the system's Transfer Guarantee, Illinois community college students need only 36 transferable hours and a minimum 3.0 grade point average.

What's next: Developing a new advocacy strategy aimed at obtaining more resources for transfers, including investing in advertising and marketing our Transfer Guarantee to prospective students.





Listening, learning and growing exposure

In Maywood, Proviso East High School students and leaders shared thoughts and advice about college recruitment, especially for underrepresented communities. Many of the students will be the first in their family to go to college.

Proviso East Principal Rodney Hull is clear about what his students need: “Provide them information and give them access and the opportunity to visit the campus, to get exposed to some of the majors and the programs.”

Illinois Speaker of the House Emanuel “Chris” Welch encouraged the students and everyone supporting them: “You have the leadership of the University of Illinois System here in front of you. They're here to help you, as you move on in your journeys. We have to make sure we're all doing our part in that.”

What's next: Working with Proviso East staff to provide tours and more guidance to students, including better communications on community college transfer programs and financial aid opportunities.

Connecting for a stronger talent pipeline

Agribusiness and agriscience jobs are in greater demand than ever. Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences positions students to pursue careers in these and other essential agriculture fields.

The school's partnership with the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences provides a pipeline that benefits all parties.

What's next: Continuing to work through the College of ACES to identify new potential targets for collaboration and increased outreach.





Jobs of tomorrow, today

At Discovery Partners Institute, Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson kicked off a lively discussion with students and leadership about improving opportunities for Chicago learners—particularly in STEM and computing-related careers.

“My commitment to this city is investing in young people. It's a core tenet of my administration," he said. "Our young people have the power to make our city stronger.”

DPI, part of the U of I System, is committed to providing educational opportunities via programs like Digital Explorers and Digital Scholars so students can help build a pre-eminent and inclusive Chicago tech economy.

Kay Monelle, who leads DPI high school programming, explains: “The kids gain a sense of belonging from us. What we offer them is the support and the ability to know that they can exist in these spaces. I love that about us … and they're just amazing kids!”

What's next: Partnering with the mayor's office on our shared agendas, and increasing communications about DPI's Community Education programs.

Bridging the transfer gaps

At Malcolm X College, our delegation met with leadership from One Million Degrees. OMD provides financial and academic support to community college students in need, with the mission of providing a bridge to higher community college graduation rates and increasing economic mobility.

The U of I System shares their commitment to these goals and to ensuring transfer pathways for community college students are seamless.

What's next: Sharing information about community college transfer programs and formalizing the relationship with OMD.





EXTRAORDINARY ALUMNI, EVERYWHERE

Ever connected to their alma maters, engaged graduates from U of I System universities continually add value through their suggestions, support, and spirit. From lifelong learning to advocating for higher education resources, partnering with alumni broadens our reach and scales our ability to strengthen the economy.

Quad Cities ambassadors

Our Quad Cities reception featured a strong alum presence. Impactful conversations with state and local leaders about workforce development, economic growth, and innovation promise to prompt exciting and beneficial changes.

Some are already happening; U of I System President Tim Killeen reaffirmed the opportunities of University of Illinois Springfield's in-state tuition pilot program for students from neighboring Scott County, Iowa.

Alumni & Advocacy





South Side advocates

We place great value on connecting with the communities we serve across the state.

About 200 alums from U of I System universities joined our delegation in Beverly on Chicago's South Side. The gathering gave alumni opportunities to engage with their elected officials and system leaders.

Partners in Peoria

We thrive on connecting and growing communities across the great state of Illinois. Alumni and legislators echoed that commitment as together we marked successes, noted progress, and charted next steps. The U of I System is strong because of our partners in advocacy and action.

We're thankful to Peoria Riverfront Museum for hosting our final 2023 state tour evening festivities.





Connecting with Metro East

Eckert's Belleville Farm provided the perfect early-autumn backdrop for celebrating alumni from our universities, as well as southern Illinois legislators. Both groups advocate for the University of Illinois System, helping us serve the state and its residents with excellence.

There's just no replacement for connecting with communities to help them grow while also staying true to their roots.

Alumni in government

At the University Club of Chicago, we capped off the northern leg of the tour by celebrating our partnership with the myriad U of I System alums working as elected officials and on staffs in Chicago, Springfield, and Washington, D.C.



ILLINOIS OUTREACH

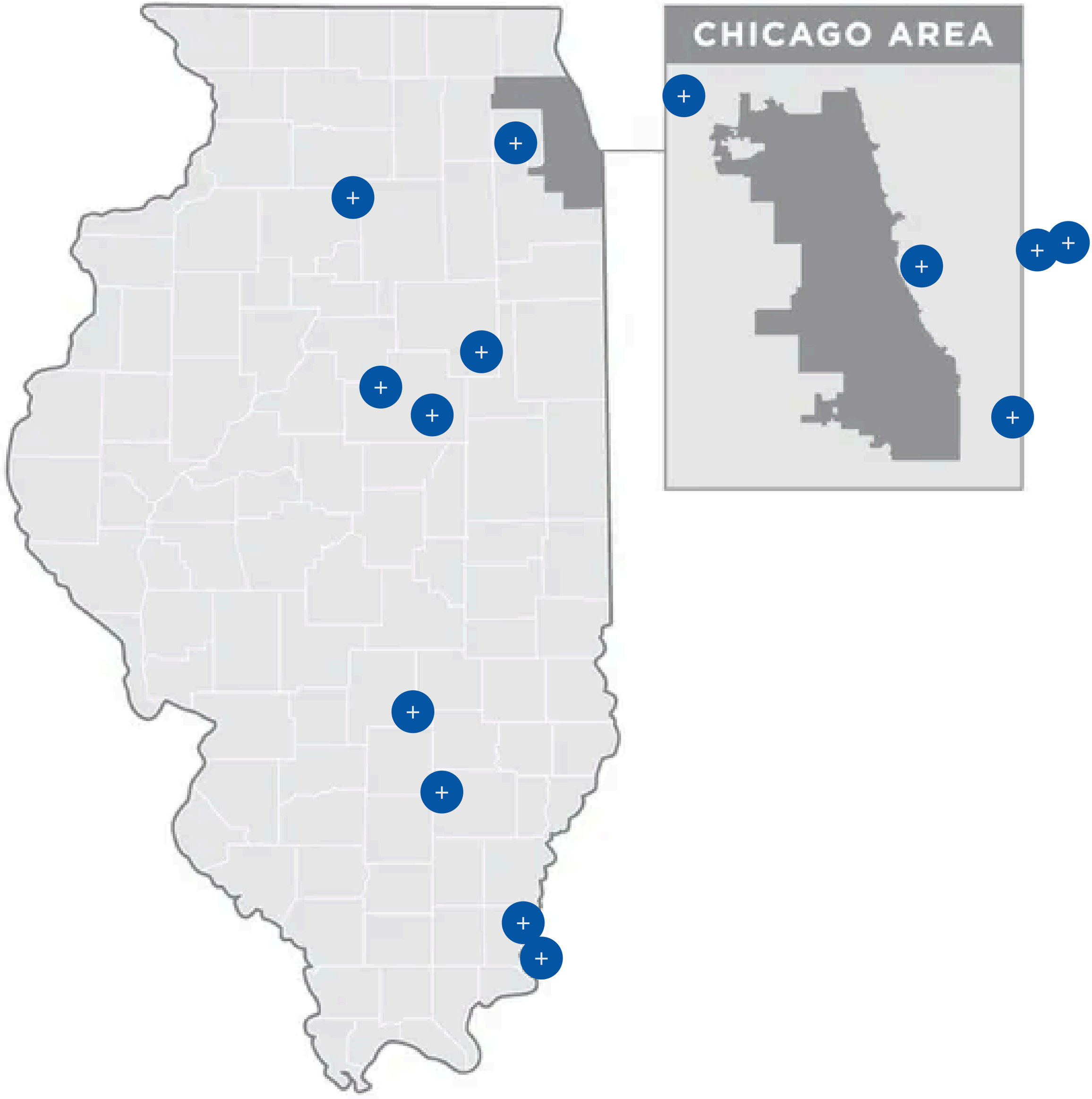
2023 was the third year of U of I System President Killeen's statewide tour.

Initial outreach focused on developing a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities throughout the state. The second tour served to explore addressing these challenges through existing and new partnerships. This year, system leaders continued the processes of listening, learning, and acting, recognizing ways in which ongoing efforts are producing results while exploring new efforts.

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