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**Reality Check App Puts Career Planning Tools in the Hands of Youth, Job Seekers**

*Going Mobile Initiative in Illinois Making Rapid Progress*

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) has teamed up with the Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) on a new Going Mobile initiative that will help teens, young adults and those considering career changes to obtain realistic projections and information. The app tells students and job seekers the reality about their career choice, so they can be prepared now for what the future could bring.

The Reality Check mobile app offers step-by-step instructions on how to evaluate a career, obtain the education and training needed for that career through a series of questions such as, “Where do you want to live?” and “What will you use for transportation?” Then it summarizes the monthly cost of these choices and generates a list of occupations that have the potential to meet this total. From there, users can explore each occupation’s educational requirements, typical tasks, work setting and salary range.

“Reality Check is a great way for young adults to really begin to consider their life choices,” said IDES Director Jeff Mays. “It shows the importance of education and job training to see what they need to do to get a good-paying job and/or stay in school. This app can help them find a path.”

The Reality Check app is one of many mobile enabled apps/websites released from DoIT, a state agency launched on July 1, 2016 to focus on modernizing technology for the State of Illinois. An initial effort of DoIT is Going Mobile in Illinois, with a goal to web enable 80 percent of citizen interactions over the next 18 months.

“Our citizens expect mobility from state government. A key aspect of DoIT’s digital transformation is increasing mobility to improve citizen engagement for government services and information,” said Hardik Bhatt, Illinois CIO and Secretary Designate for the Department of Innovation & Technology. “Reality Check is the latest release in Illinois’ Going Mobile initiative. It is one more in a growing list of mobile responsive apps, and a testament to Governor Rauner’s commitment to IT modernization.”

There are three ways to use Reality Check:

1. Add up a wish list of options in housing, cars, clothing, entertainment and other expenses
2. Put in an expected future salary and then subtract expenses
3. Search for an occupation in Reality Check and then subtract expenses from the occupation's usual monthly income

The next step after entering Reality Check is to select a desired location from one of 13 Illinois cities which offer a complete cross-section of possible options. Each city has a different cost of living, which will be factored into the final analysis.

The tool provides school counselors and teachers of subjects such as Career and Technical Education, Financial Literacy and Family and Consumer Sciences another way to approach education planning. It can also serve a powerful conversation-starter for facilitators of afterschool and other programs working with youth who need help picturing a path to financially sustainable futures.

The Career Information System is especially valuable to adults considering a career change; parents introducing elementary students to basic work concepts and expectations; high school students considering college courses and vocational training; and educators guiding students through college testing and career assessments. Specific guidance also is offered for Veterans, the disabled and the formerly incarcerated.

Adults are able to benefit from assessments that identify occupations that match an individual's interests, skills and preferences. Suggestions on how to build a resume, interview techniques and tips to be successful in the workplace also are available.

Reality Check can be downloaded at the [Android app store](#), as well as in the Apple app store by searching "Illinois Reality Check".

The Career Information System ([ilcis.intocareers.org](http://ilcis.intocareers.org)) delivers localized occupational and career information in an intuitive, user-friendly, online format. It includes tools to learn about occupations, financial aid, apprenticeships, post-secondary schools and colleges. Salary information and job trends are available as well as information on self-employment and how military employment translates into the civilian arena.

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