



IDES Helps Jobseekers Transfer Skills to New Jobs

by Troy McMillan

The recent recession has left some people struggling to reposition themselves in an economy that no longer demands their old jobs. To help job seekers overcome this challenge, the Illinois Department of Employment Security has begun using a new and innovative tool called TORQ.

Officially referred to as Transferable Occupation Relationship Quotient, TORQ is a web-based skills transfer tool. It helps job seekers think outside the box and identify alternative occupations for their skills. It

also provides job seekers their very own personal employment plan, including real-time job opportunities in Illinois and action steps for updating their skills.

Here is how TORQ works: An Illinois workNet Center staff person initiates the skills transfer process with job seekers by entering their current or past occupation into the TORQ system. The system then produces a list of related in-demand occupations and a corresponding TORQ score that identifies how easy or challenging it would be for job seekers to transfer their



skills to the alternative occupations. In addition, TORQ reveals the number of current Illinois job openings, median annual wages, recommended skills upgrading (if needed), nearby training programs and real-time job ads for each identified occupation. Then, using either Illinois workNet Center or their own computers, job seekers can apply for any of the job openings identified through the system.

Illinois veterans, in particular, will benefit from TORQ. IDES Veterans

Representatives use TORQ to help military personnel translate their military occupational codes to employment opportunities in the civilian world. For example, IDES recently helped a Senior Airman realize that her skills as a Military Air Traffic Control Operator transferred to civilian occupations, such as Air Traffic Controller, Supervisory Air Traffic Control Specialist and Communications Operator. Of equal importance is the fact that her Air Force Specialty

Code (1C151) linked to several new civilian job openings.

In addition to its occupational transfer feature, TORQ is useful for large scale economic research and analysis. Labor Market Economists from IDES will use TORQ to tackle more “macro” workforce issues, such as mass layoffs, and to highlight regional labor force talent that will attract new businesses and jobs to Illinois.

As of the publishing of this article, 10 other states, including neighboring Indiana, use TORQ. Illinois, with 200 TORQ licenses, has the largest number of TORQ users of any state workforce system.

Currently, TORQ is being deployed to IDES local offices, Illinois workNet Centers and affiliate offices across the state. IDES is counting on TORQ to help get workers back to work in the right kinds of in-demand jobs that will build a stronger Illinois economy.

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Facts about TORQ:

- TORQ is a web-based tool that helps job seekers transfer their skills to new types of jobs.
- 10 states, including Illinois, have licensed TORQ users.

For more information, contact our Illinois Group Administrator Troy McMillan at des.torq@illinois.gov.