State of Illinois

Office of the Auditor General

Performance Audit of the

State Monies Provided to the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network

August 18, 2026

Christopher B. Meister

Auditor General

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OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
CHRISTOPHER B. MEISTER

To the Legislative Audit Commission, the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the President and Minority Leader of the Senate, the members of the General Assembly, and the Governor:

This is our report of the performance audit of the State monies provided to the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network.

The audit was conducted pursuant to Legislative Audit Commission Resolution Number 168. This audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards and the audit standards promulgated by the Office of the Auditor General at 74 Ill. Adm. Code 420.310.

The audit report is transmitted in conformance with Sections 3-14 and 3-15 of the Illinois State Auditing Act.

SIGNED ORIGINAL ON FILE

CHRISTOPHER B. MEISTER
Auditor General

Springfield, Illinois
August 2026

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Performance Audit of the

State Monies Provided to the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network

Background:

On April 29, 2025, the Legislative Audit Commission adopted Resolution Number 168, which directed the Office of the Auditor General to conduct a performance audit of the State monies provided to the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network to examine the entities' purpose and handling of funds appropriated by the General Assembly (see Appendix A). The Illinois Innovation Network and its primary hub, the Discovery Partners Institute, were developed to accelerate innovation, job creation, and economic growth throughout Illinois and consists of 15 hubs across the State, including hubs at public universities and one independent nonprofit hub. On October 10, 2024, the University instructed the Director of the Capital Development Board to stop construction on the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters. On October 18, 2024, the University of Illinois System President announced that construction for the new headquarters at The 78 in downtown Chicago had stopped. Under the University's new vision, a new location called the Discovery Partners Institute South would be established at the planned Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park while maintaining the Discovery Partners Institute's current downtown Chicago headquarters.

Key Findings:

- Auditors identified 68 payments for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters and 225 payments for all the additional Illinois Innovation Network hubs combined. Auditors reviewed supporting documentation provided by the Capital Development Board for each payment and determined that payments were adequate, accurate, appropriate, and were properly monitored by Capital Development Board. Additionally, auditors found that each payment from FY23 through FY25 was accountable and appeared accurately on the Illinois Office of the Comptroller's website.
- As of June 2025, $57.4 million of State appropriations were expended for the Illinois Innovation Network hubs, not including the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters. The expenditures from the $500 million in capital funding appropriated to support the development of the Discovery Partners Institute and the statewide Illinois Innovation Network totaled $13.1 million, while expenditures from other State appropriations totaled $44.3 million.
- From FY18 through FY25, $11,815,882 in State appropriations were used for the DPI's administrative and operational personnel costs. Additionally, $37,918,782 was expended by the State for the design and construction costs for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters through FY25. Therefore, total State funds used for the Discovery Partners Institute were $49.7 million.
- The Discovery Partners Institute made progress toward achieving its established goals. According to the University of Illinois, its established goals were 1) applied and translational research; 2) research-driven entrepreneurship and commercialization; and 3) talent development for the next-generation workforce. A five-year summary report on the progress since inception for the three core goals was provided by the University of Illinois.

The audit report contained no recommendations directed at the University of Illinois or the Capital Development Board. This performance audit was conducted by the staff of the Office of the Auditor General.

Report Digest

On April 29, 2025, the Legislative Audit Commission adopted Resolution Number 168, which directed the Office of the Auditor General to conduct a performance audit of the State monies provided to the Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) and the Illinois Innovation Network (IIN) to examine the entities' purpose and handling of funds appropriated by the General Assembly. The Resolution contained three determinations. Our assessment of these determinations is shown in **Digest Exhibit 1**. (page 1)

Digest Exhibit 1
ASSESSMENT OF AUDIT DETERMINATIONS

Determination from Audit Resolution	Auditor Assessment
A comprehensive accounting of all expenditures of State monies by the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network, assessing the adequacy and appropriateness of these expenditures.	• Auditors identified 68 payments for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters and 225 payments for all the additional Illinois Innovation Network hubs combined. Auditors reviewed supporting documentation provided by the Capital Development Board for each payment and determined that payments were adequate, accurate, appropriate, and were properly monitored by the Capital Development Board. Additionally, auditors found that each payment from FY23 through FY25 was accountable and appeared accurately on the Illinois Office of the Comptroller's website. (pages 27-28)
A thorough evaluation of the allocation, utilization, and monitoring of the $500 million appropriated to the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the Capital Development Board by the Illinois General Assembly, ensuring accuracy and accountability.	• As of June 2025, $57.4 million of State appropriations were expended for the IIN hubs, not including the DPI headquarters. The expenditures from the $500 million appropriation totaled $13.1 million, while expenditures from other State appropriations totaled $44.3 million. (pages 8-9) • From FY18 through FY25, $11,815,882 in State appropriations were used for the DPI's administrative and operational personnel costs. Additionally, $37,918,782 was expended by the State for the design and construction costs for the DPI headquarters through FY25. Therefore, total State funds used for the DPI were $49.7 million. (pages 13-20)

An assessment of DPI's purpose, goals, and impact to include documentation of DPI's original stated purpose and objectives at its inception; records of any mission, strategic, or operational changes since the initiative began; performance assessments highlighting progress made toward achieving stated goals; and an assessment on the impact of any changes to its mission and projects since inception on the initiative and its funding to determine if DPI is meeting the purposes for which State monies were provided.	• The DPI made progress toward achieving its established goals. According to the University of Illinois, its established goals were 1) applied and translational research; 2) research-driven entrepreneurship and commercialization; and 3) talent development for the next-generation workforce. A five-year summary report on the progress since inception for the three core goals was provided by the University of Illinois. (pages 11, 20-25)

Source: OAG assessment of the audit determinations contained in Legislative Audit Commission Resolution Number 168.

Background

In an October 2017 press release, Governor Bruce Rauner and the University of Illinois System announced plans for the Illinois Innovation Network. The Illinois Innovation Network and its primary hub, the Discovery Partners Institute, were being developed to accelerate innovation, job creation, and economic growth throughout Illinois and consists of 15 hubs across the State, including hubs at public universities and one independent nonprofit hub (Distillery Labs). Exhibit 1, in the audit report, provides a timeline of the Illinois Innovation Network and Discovery Partners Institute. (pages 2-3)

Illinois Innovation Network

According to the Capital Development Board (CDB), as of June 2025, $57.4 million of State appropriations were expended for the Illinois Innovation Network hubs, not including the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters **(see Digest Exhibit 2)**. The expenditures from the $500 million appropriation totaled $13.1 million, while expenditures from other State appropriations totaled $44.3 million. The Illinois Innovation Network was formed in May 2019 and consists of 15 hubs across the State, including one at each public university. The mission statement for the Illinois Innovation Network is: "The Illinois Innovation Network fosters collaboration, increases capacity, and integrates systems in education, research, and innovation by connecting people, organizations, and resources. Together, we build equitable, inclusive, and sustainable communities across Illinois." (pages 4-9)

Digest Exhibit 2
ILLINOIS INNOVATION NETWORK HUB EXPENDITURES[1]
As of June 30, 2025

Illinois Innovation Network Hub	Hub Expenditures	Other State Expenditures
Chicago State University	$0	$4,491,415.10
Distillery Labs [2]	$9,500,000.00	$0
Eastern Illinois University [2]	$956,600.92	$0
Governors State University	$71,977.56	$0
Northeastern Illinois University	$109,454.75	$0
Northern Illinois University	$531,009.50	$0
Southern Illinois University Carbondale	$39,160.00	$0
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville	$75,785.00	$0
University of Illinois Chicago	$671,021.28	$0
University of Illinois Springfield	$1,174,726.59	$0
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	$10,945.92	$39,787,416.87
Totals[3]	**$13,140,681.52**	**$44,278,831.97**

[1] Exhibit does not include expenditures for the Discovery Partners Institute.

[2] Project has been completed.

[3] Projects at Illinois State University, University of Illinois College of Medicine Rockford, Western Illinois University, as well as additional projects at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, have not had any expenditures as of June 30, 2025.

Source: Capital Development Board.

Discovery Partners Institute

The Discovery Partners Institute is a joint education, research, and innovation institute led by the University of Illinois System. According to University of Illinois officials, the Discovery Partners Institute is to serve as "an engine for equitable economic development in Chicagoland by building collaborative partnerships to address societal grand challenges through 1) applied and translational research; 2) research-driven entrepreneurship and commercialization; and 3) talent development for the next-generation workforce."

According to documentation provided by the University of Illinois, **$11,815,882** in State appropriations were used for the Discovery Partners Institute's administrative and operational personnel costs from FY18 through FY25 (as of January 2026).

Auditors determined that from FY18 through FY25 (as of January 2026), the Discovery Partners Institute expended nearly $92 million in total for administration and operations. As seen in **Digest Exhibit 3**, the largest expenditure was approximately $47 million for salaries and wages. Of the $92 million, only 25 percent of the $47 million **($11,815,882) for salaries and wages was from State appropriations**.

Digest Exhibit 3
ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATING EXPENDITURES FOR THE DISCOVERY PARTNERS INSTITUTE BY EXPENSE TYPE
FY18 through FY25 (as of January 2026)

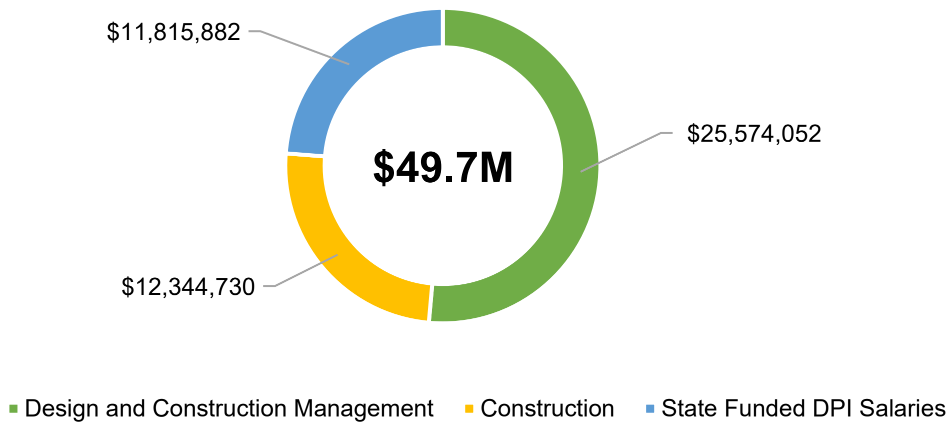
Expense Type	Total Expense
Miscellaneous	$277,051
Allowances	364,824
Non-Mandatory Transfers	512,905
Plant Expenditures	611,414
Transportation Services	710,383
Equipment/Software/Capital Lease	782,622
Indirect Costs Pool	3,283,843
Fringe Benefits	4,245,397
Materials and Supplies	5,520,637
General and Professional Services	28,928,284
Salaries and Wages[1]	46,662,638
Total	**$91,899,998**

[1] State appropriations for salaries and wages were $11.8 million. No other State appropriations were expended on administrative and operating expenses.

Source: University of Illinois documentation.

Auditors also determined that **$37,918,782** was expended by the State for design and construction management ($25,574,052) and construction costs ($12,344,730) for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters through FY25 (as of January 2026). **Therefore, as seen in Digest Exhibit 4, total State funds used for the Discovery Partners Institute were $49.7 million.**

Digest Exhibit 4
STATE FUNDS USED FOR THE DISCOVERY PARTNERS INSTITUTE
As of June 30, 2025



Note: The total State funded portion of the cost for the headquarters does not include $75,225.60 paid to Johnson Lasky Kindelin Architects, Inc. and $10,740.40 for the Chicago Title and Trust. These expenditures were paid by the University of Illinois.

Source: Summary of Capital Development Board and University of Illinois documentation.

The Discovery Partners Institute headquarters project was cancelled in October 2024, about a month and a half after construction began (Clark was authorized to begin construction on August 22, 2024). According to information provided by the Capital Development Board and the University of Illinois, as of June 30, 2025, $38 million was spent on the project (see **Digest Exhibit 4**). The majority of the expenditures (85.2%) were to Jacobs Consultants, Inc. (Jacobs) and Clark Construction Group – Chicago LLC (Clark). Jacobs was the architect/engineering company contracted to design the headquarters. Clark was the contractor and Turner-Descoto-Powers & Sons-Cullen Joint Venture (Turner) was the construction management firm. The remaining expenditures went to three architecture firms, which were awarded stipends for submitting design proposals.

As noted in **Digest Exhibit 5**, the expenditures for Jacobs, Clark, and Turner included construction administration fees (CAF) charged to projects for CDB oversight. As a result, once the CAF was subtracted, Jacobs was paid $19.3 million, Clark was paid almost $12.0 million, and Turner was paid almost $5.0 million. The actual payments made to all three of these contractors did not include the construction administration fees charged to projects for CDB oversight.

Digest Exhibit 5
THE DISCOVERY PARTNERS INSTITUTE HEADQUARTERS COST EXPENDITURES
By Contract as of June 30, 2025

Contractor	Expenditure
Jacobs Consultants, Inc.[1]	$20,039,231.97
Clark Construction Group – Chicago LLC[1]	12,344,730.00
Turner-Descoto-Powers & Sons-Cullen Joint Venture[1]	5,384,819.94
Johnson Lasky Kindelin Architects, Inc.	75,225.60
F+P Architects New York, Inc.	75,000.00
Studio Gang Architects, Ltd.	75,000.00
Chicago Title and Trust	10,740.40
Total	**$38,004,747.91**

[1] Includes construction administration fees as follows: Jacobs - $722,300; Clark - $359,555; and Turner - $391,900. These fees are charged by CDB for project oversight.

Source: Capital Development Board and the University of Illinois.

The total construction cost for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters was $12.3 million. As shown in **Digest Exhibit 6**, Clark Construction was paid just under $12 million (not including a construction administration fee charged to projects for CDB oversight). The $6 million paid to Clark Construction (not subcontractors) included insurance, mobilization/demobilization and overhead costs, and profit. (pages 10-20)

Digest Exhibit 6
CLARK CONSTRUCTION GROUP EXPENDITURES FOR THE DISCOVERY PARTNERS INSTITUTE HEADQUARTERS PROJECT

Expense	Total Expense
Subcontractors	$6,056,192
Bond	77,313
General Liability Insurance	191,763
Excess Insurance	371,076
Builder's Risk Insurance	26,546
Overhead/Mobilization/Demobilization	3,212,284
Profit	2,050,000
Clark Total	**$11,985,174**
Construction Administration Fee (CAF)	359,555
Total with CAF	**$12,344,730**

Note: The construction administration fee (CAF) is charged to projects for CDB oversight.

Source: Capital Development Board.

Discovery Partners Institute Purpose, Goals, and Impact

The Discovery Partners Institute made progress toward achieving its established goals. According to the University of Illinois, its established goals were 1) applied and translational research; 2) research-driven entrepreneurship and commercialization; and 3) talent development for the next-generation workforce. A five-year summary report on the progress since inception for the three core goals was provided by the University of Illinois. (pages 11, 20-23)

Decision to Stop Construction of the Discovery Partners Institute Headquarters

On October 10, 2024, the University instructed the Director of the Capital Development Board to stop construction on the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters. On October 18, 2024, University of Illinois System President Timothy Killeen announced that construction for the new Discovery Partners Institute headquarters at The 78 in downtown Chicago had stopped. Under the University's new vision, a new location called the Discovery Partners Institute South would be established at the planned Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park while maintaining the Discovery Partners Institute's current downtown Chicago headquarters located at 200 S. Wacker Drive. Additional documentation from the University identified by auditors noted: "Planning should pivot away from building a DPI headquarters on The 78. To build more office spaces and dry labs on The 78, especially given the unforeseen real estate situation, **no additional entities committed to The 78, and most importantly, not having an intellectually-driven focus to DPI – presents significant risk to its future.** DPI should not be a hall mark facility, rather DPI is a bold vision and should be considered as a series of facilities across the Chicagoland area." [Emphasis added.] According to University of Illinois officials, "this is a mix of secondary reasons and commentary from the proposal that the Dean put forward that had nothing to do with the decision." Additionally, University officials noted, these individual comments from this document are "not what drove the decision. These were perspectives from one university leader." Auditors asked University of Illinois officials why the scope of the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters project changed. Officials noted it was President Timothy Killeen's decision to expand in this way and to move from The 78 and create two separate locations. (pages 23-25)

Review of Discovery Partners Institute and Illinois Innovation Network Expenditures

Auditors identified 68 payments for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters and 225 payments for all the additional Illinois Innovation Network hubs combined. Auditors reviewed supporting documentation provided by the Capital Development Board for each payment and determined that payments were adequate, accurate, appropriate, and were properly monitored by the Capital Development Board. Additionally, auditors found that each payment from FY23 through FY25 was accountable and appeared accurately on the Illinois Office of the Comptroller's website. (pages 27-28)

Audit Recommendations

The audit report contained no recommendations directed at the University of Illinois or the Capital Development Board. The response from the University of Illinois is included in this report as Appendix D. The Capital Development Board did not provide a response.

This performance audit was conducted by the staff of the Office of the Auditor General.

SIGNED ORIGINAL ON FILE

TRICIA WAGNER
Division Director

This report is transmitted in accordance with Sections 3-14 and 3-15 of the Illinois State Auditing Act.

SIGNED ORIGINAL ON FILE

CHRISTOPHER B. MEISTER
Auditor General

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Contents

Introduction

On April 29, 2025, the Legislative Audit Commission adopted Resolution Number 168, which directed the Office of the Auditor General to conduct a performance audit of the State monies provided to the Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) and the Illinois Innovation Network to examine the entities' purpose and handling of funds appropriated by the General Assembly (see **Appendix A**). The audit was to specifically include, but not be limited to, the following determinations:

1. A comprehensive accounting of all expenditures of State monies by the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network, assessing the adequacy and appropriateness of these expenditures;
2. A thorough evaluation of the allocation, utilization, and monitoring of the $500 million appropriated to the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the Capital Development Board by the Illinois General Assembly, ensuring accuracy and accountability; and
3. An assessment of DPI's purpose, goals, and impact to include documentation of DPI's original stated purpose and objectives at its inception; records of any mission, strategic, or operational changes since the initiative began; performance assessments highlighting progress made toward achieving stated goals; and an assessment on the impact of any changes to its mission and projects since inception on the initiative and its funding to determine if DPI is meeting the purposes for which State monies were provided.

Background

In an October 2017 press release, Governor Bruce Rauner and the University of Illinois System announced plans for the Illinois Innovation Network. The Illinois Innovation Network and its primary hub, the Discovery Partners Institute, were being developed to accelerate innovation, job creation, and economic growth throughout Illinois and consists of 15 hubs across the State, including hubs at public universities and one independent nonprofit hub (Distillery Labs). The $1.2 billion network of research universities, businesses, and public sector partners was to focus on the development of solutions in computing and big data, advanced materials, food and agriculture, and biosciences and health.

According to the press release, the Illinois Innovation Network "will help ensure a knowledge-based, 21st century economy in Illinois where discovery and innovation are the focal points. The plan is to nurture the inventors and entrepreneurs of tomorrow by allowing them to hone their talents in Illinois. The network is led by the University of Illinois System and is governed by the IIN Council which is comprised of member organizations from public universities across Illinois and a member from Distillery Labs. The University of Chicago and Northwestern University were also inaugural partners."

Governor Rauner recommended the half-billion dollars in funding for the initiatives in his FY19 budget proposal to the legislature, saying the investment "could be the biggest spark ever to ignite our economic growth engine."

Some of the State funding was to be used for the design and construction of the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters. According to a University of Illinois press release, the Discovery Partners Institute was to be home to "world-class research and hands-on educational training for hundreds of students, as well as to hubs of the IIN [Illinois Innovation Network] stretching across Illinois beyond Chicago."

According to information provided by the University of Illinois, the initial planning began by the University in 2016. The timeline provided ended in October 2024 with the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters project being paused to prioritize real estate development for the Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Project and a new "Loop-based" investment. **Exhibit 1** shows a timeline of events for the Illinois Innovation Network and the Discovery Partners Institute implementation.

Exhibit 1
ILLINOIS INNOVATION NETWORK AND DISCOVERY PARTNERS INSTITUTE TIMELINE

October 2017	Governor Bruce Rauner and the University of Illinois System formally announced the creation of the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network.
June 2018	The Illinois General Assembly approved $500 million in capital funding to support the development of the Discovery Partners Institute and the statewide Illinois Innovation Network.
May 2019	The Illinois Innovation Network was formed.
January 2020	Governor Pritzker released $500 million in capital funding: $235M for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters and $265 million for the Illinois Innovation Network regional hubs.
November 2020	The Capital Development Board selected Jacobs Consultants as the Architect/Engineer firm for the construction of the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters at The 78 on November 17, 2020.
December 2020	The Pritzker Foundation donated $10 million to the Discovery Partners Institute to launch the Pritzker Tech Talent Labs, a major workforce development initiative.
March 2022	The Discovery Partners Institute received the title to one acre of land near 15th and Wells streets in Chicago that is part of the 62-acre property known as The 78.
September 2022	The Discovery Partners Institute revised its real estate plans, reducing the building footprint to 200,000 square feet due to rising construction costs and budget considerations.
March 2024	The Capital Development Board issued requests for proposals for the construction of the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters.
August 2024	The Capital Development Board authorized Clark Construction Group to begin construction of the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters building at The 78 on August 22, 2024.
October 2024	The University of Illinois contacted the Capital Development Board to pause construction at The 78 to prioritize strategic real estate development for the Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Project and a new “Loop-based” investment.

Source: University of Illinois documentation.

Illinois Innovation Network

According to the Capital Development Board (CDB), as of June 2025, $57.4 million of State appropriations were expended for the Illinois Innovation Network hubs, not including the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters. The expenditures from the $500 million appropriation totaled $13.1 million, while expenditures from other State appropriations totaled $44.3 million. The Illinois Innovation Network was formed in May 2019 and consists of 15 hubs across the State, including hubs at public universities and one independent nonprofit hub (Distillery Labs). The mission statement for the Illinois Innovation Network is: "The Illinois Innovation Network fosters collaboration, increases capacity, and integrates systems in education, research, and innovation by connecting people, organizations, and resources. Together, we build equitable, inclusive, and sustainable communities across Illinois."

The Illinois Innovation Network was formed in May 2019 and consists of 15 hubs across the State, including one at each public university and the Distillery Labs in Peoria. The Illinois Innovation Network was to be a vehicle for accelerating the collaboration and potential impact of these hubs. It is led by the University of Illinois System and is governed by the IIN Council. The IIN Council established working committees to drive efforts in the core areas of corporate engagement, education and workforce development, entrepreneurship, public policy, and research and collaboration. According to a study done by Boston Consulting Group in 2019, the Illinois Innovation Network hubs were estimated to have a $19 billion economic impact and create close to 48,000 new jobs over the first 10 years. **Exhibit 2** shows the hubs, their goals, and the components each project entails; the Discovery Partners Institute is excluded from this exhibit as it is discussed in the following section.

Exhibit 2
ILLINOIS INNOVATION NETWORK GOALS AND PROJECT COMPONENTS
As of June 2025

University/Hub	Project	Initial Goals	Project Components
Chicago State University	Center for Urban Solutions	Address the health, social, economic, and environmental issues confronting the south side of Chicago, including violence reduction, urban food disparities, and economic development.	Renovation of Douglas Hall to house the Center for Solutions of Urban Populations
Distillery Labs	Distillery Labs	Improve the wellness of underserved populations and advance systems related to food, farming, and transportation – specifically autonomous mobility.	Renovation of building in downtown Peoria

Exhibit 2
ILLINOIS INNOVATION NETWORK GOALS AND PROJECT COMPONENTS
As of June 2025

University/Hub	Project	Initial Goals	Project Components
Eastern Illinois University	East-Central Illinois Hub	Address issues of environment, economic development, entrepreneurship, visualization of community-based assets and infrastructure assessments, rural social systems, and community sustainability.	Expansion of existing Center for Clean Energy and Research Education on the EIU campus
Governors State University	Supply Chain Innovation Center and Business Incubator (SCICBI)	Provide faculty consulting to businesses and startups in Chicago's metropolitan region and deliver employee training and management development programs to assist in the creation of new businesses and the creation and retention of jobs.	Renovation of vacant campus building to house SCICBI
Illinois State University	Community Makerspace and Educational Center Bloomington-Normal Startup Incubator	Support entrepreneurial ideation, entrepreneurship exploration, innovation, prototyping, and training for students, faculty, community members, and businesses and provide proof of concept product development, integrated incubation support, entrepreneurs-in-residence, faculty advisors, and professional incubator management.	Renovation of community facility located near campus to create a multi-region makerspace and workforce development center
Northeastern Illinois University	Business Innovation and Growth Center	Ensure access to economic development opportunities to underrepresented and underserved communities, including discovery and commercialization of research, entrepreneurship, and workforce development.	Renovation of two campus buildings
Northern Illinois University	Northern Illinois Center for Community Stability (NICCS)	Create new knowledge, inform policymaking, and inspire action in three interrelated areas: food systems innovation, water resources stewardship and development, and climate change adaptation.	Construction of new facility to house the NICCS

Exhibit 2
ILLINOIS INNOVATION NETWORK GOALS AND PROJECT COMPONENTS
As of June 2025

University/Hub	Project	Initial Goals	Project Components
Southern Illinois University – Carbondale	Illinois Food, Entrepreneurship, Research, and Manufacturing Hub	Solve food/nutrition, agriculture, and health challenges through transdisciplinary research, innovation, and education and provide infrastructure for the development of Illinois agriculture value-added products to promote and support successful entrepreneurial activities.	Build-out of the fermentation sciences facility and related activities on SIUC's campus
Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville	Center for Sustainable Communities and Entrepreneurship (CSCE)	Provide an interdisciplinary research, workforce, and learning space for university-community-industry collaboration and facilitate technology transfer and capture a greater share of the burgeoning St. Louis startup economy for Illinois.	Renovation of existing building on SIUE campus to house CSCE and Metropolitan Accelerator Research Square
University of Illinois – Chicago	Drug Discovery and Cancer Innovation Pavilion UIC Innovation Center Expansion	Enable UIC's growth as a leader in the discovery, development, and commercialization of drugs and pharmaceutical technologies and support growth of programs and activities that connect research and education with industry, increasing collaborative work with new and existing partners and expanding student access to the innovation education offered through the Innovation Center.	Construction of new building to house Drug Discovery and Cancer Innovation Pavilion Expansion of the UIC Innovation Center
University of Illinois – Springfield	Innovation Hub	Advance the regional economy by working with industry and government partners to build a robust and inclusive human capital and innovation pipeline and inspire an innovative culture, attract entrepreneurs, and become a catalyst for a larger innovation district in downtown Springfield.	Renovation of existing building in downtown Springfield

Exhibit 2
ILLINOIS INNOVATION NETWORK GOALS AND PROJECT COMPONENTS
As of June 2025

University/Hub	Project	Initial Goals	Project Components
University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign	Altgeld Hall and Illini Hall New Research and Education Center	Support Illinois Innovation Network activities in computing and data, health and wellness, and entrepreneurship.	Renovation of Altgeld Hall - Replacement of Illini Hall Construction of new facilities for growth-stage startup companies and commercialization of UI technology
University of Illinois College of Medicine – Rockford	Illinois Rural Hub	Expand health professions education programs and house them in one facility. It will also expand multi-disciplinary research and primary and tertiary care services and grow community engagement to spur economic development in rural communities.	Construction of new building on Rockford campus
Western Illinois University	Center for Manufacturing and Entrepreneurial Excellence	Drive innovation, workforce development, and economic growth to meet regional needs in the Quad Cities' three leading sectors of manufacturing, defense, and agriculture. It will utilize data analytics, visualization, and artificial intelligence to improve economies and communities across rural Illinois.	Construction of new Quad Cities Innovation Center on the WIU-QC campus in Moline and Technological infrastructure for the Community Innovation Center on WIU's Macomb campus

Source: 2021 Illinois Innovation Network Strategic Plan from the University of Illinois documentation.

According to the University of Illinois, the Illinois Innovation Network has developed multiple new programs alongside the 15 hubs, including:

- Illinois Broadband Lab;
- ABE-LINC Broadband Project;
- MachH2 – Regional Hydrogen Hub;
- M.I.I. – Make It in Illinois; and
- PROWD – Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development.

In addition to the 15 hubs, the Illinois Innovation Network has strategic partnerships with the following entities:

- Government College Relations Council;
- Great Lakes Higher Education Consortium;
- Illinois State Agencies;
- Illinois Lieutenant Governor's Office;
- Illinois Community College Board;
- Illinois Institute of Rural Affairs;
- City Colleges of Chicago; and
- Illinois Community College Board.

The Illinois Innovation Network drafted both a vision statement and a mission statement. As noted in its 2021 Strategic Plan, the vision statement describes the destination, while the mission statement describes how the Illinois Innovation Network will get to that destination. The vision statement is: "The Illinois Innovation Network drives inclusive and integrated research, innovation, and economic development across Illinois." The mission statement is: "The Illinois Innovation Network fosters collaboration, increases capacity, and integrates systems in education, research, and innovation by connecting people, organizations, and resources. Together, we build equitable, inclusive, and sustainable communities across Illinois."

Illinois Innovation Network Vision Statement	**Illinois Innovation Network Mission Statement**
The Illinois Innovation Network drives inclusive and integrated research, innovation, and economic development across Illinois.	The Illinois Innovation Network fosters collaboration, increases capacity, and integrates systems in education, research, and innovation by connecting people, organizations, and resources. Together, we build equitable, inclusive, and sustainable communities across Illinois.

Illinois Innovation Network Expenditures

Legislative Audit Commission Resolution Number 168 (Resolution) asked the Auditor General to perform a comprehensive accounting of all expenditures of State monies by the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network, assessing the adequacy and appropriateness of these expenditures. The Resolution also asked for a thorough evaluation of the allocation, utilization, and monitoring of the $500 million appropriated to the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the Capital Development Board by the Illinois General Assembly, ensuring accuracy and accountability. As shown in **Exhibit 3**, according to the Capital Development Board, as of June 30, 2025, $57.4 million was expended for the Illinois Innovation Network hubs (does not include the Discovery Partners Institute). The expenditures from the Illinois Innovation Network appropriation totaled $13.1 million, while expenditures from other State appropriations totaled $44.3 million. Based on the information provided, two of the hub projects have been completed:

- the Distillery Labs; and
- various projects at Eastern Illinois University.

The largest expenditure so far was for multiple projects at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign ($39.8 million).

Exhibit 3
ILLINOIS INNOVATION NETWORK HUB EXPENDITURES[1]
As of June 30, 2025

Illinois Innovation Network Hub	Hub Expenditures	Other State Expenditures
Chicago State University	$0	$4,491,415.10
Distillery Labs [2]	$9,500,000.00	$0
Eastern Illinois University [2]	$956,600.92	$0
Governors State University	$71,977.56	$0
Northeastern Illinois University	$109,454.75	$0
Northern Illinois University	$531,009.50	$0
Southern Illinois University Carbondale	$39,160.00	$0
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville	$75,785.00	$0
University of Illinois Chicago	$671,021.28	$0
University of Illinois Springfield	$1,174,726.59	$0
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	$10,945.92	$39,787,416.87
Totals[3]	**$13,140,681.52**	**$44,278,831.97**

[1] Exhibit does not include expenditures for the Discovery Partners Institute.

[2] Project has been completed.

[3] Projects at Illinois State University, University of Illinois College of Medicine Rockford, Western Illinois University, as well as additional projects at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, have not had any expenditures as of June 30, 2025.

Source: Capital Development Board.

Discovery Partners Institute

The Discovery Partners Institute is a joint education, research, and innovation institute led by the University of Illinois System. According to University of Illinois officials, the Discovery Partners Institute is to serve as "an engine for equitable economic development in Chicagoland by building collaborative partnerships to address societal grand challenges through 1) applied and translational research; 2) research-driven entrepreneurship and commercialization; and 3) talent development for the next-generation workforce."

According to documentation provided by the University of Illinois, **$11,815,882** in State appropriations were used for the Discovery Partners Institute's administrative and operational personnel costs from FY18 through FY25 (as of January 2026). Auditors also determined that **$37,918,782** was expended by the State for the design and construction costs for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters through FY25 (as of January 2026). **Therefore, total State funds used for the Discovery Partners Institute were $49.7 million.**

The Discovery Partners Institute made progress toward achieving its established goals. A five-year summary report on the progress since inception for the three core goals was provided by the University of Illinois.

On October 10, 2024, the University instructed the Capital Development Board to stop construction on the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters. On October 18, 2024, University of Illinois System President Timothy Killeen announced that construction for the new Discovery Partners Institute headquarters at The 78 in downtown Chicago had stopped. Under the University's new vision, a new location called the Discovery Partners Institute South would be established at the planned Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park while maintaining the Discovery Partners Institute's current downtown Chicago headquarters located at 200 S. Wacker Drive. Additional documentation from the University identified by auditors noted: **"**Planning should pivot away from building a DPI headquarters on The 78. To build more office spaces and dry labs on The 78, especially given the unforeseen real estate situation, **no additional entities committed to The 78, and most importantly, not having an intellectually-driven focus to DPI – presents significant risk to its future.** DPI should not be a hall mark facility, rather DPI is a bold vision and should be considered as a series of facilities across the Chicagoland area." [Emphasis added.] According to University of Illinois officials, "this is a mix of secondary reasons and commentary from the proposal that the Dean put forward that had nothing to do with the decision." Additionally, University officials noted, these individual comments from this document are "not what drove the decision. These were perspectives from one university leader." Auditors asked University of Illinois officials why the scope of the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters project changed. Officials noted it was President Timothy Killeen's decision to expand in this way and to move from The 78 and create two separate locations.

According to University of Illinois documentation, the Discovery Partners Institute's mission is to "establish collaborative partnerships that address 21st century societal grand challenges, promote entrepreneurship, and educate the next-generation workforce. Its primary goal is to conduct purpose-driven research and education that create actionable results that will have tangible results throughout the economy, including those for the underserved. To fulfill its mission, the Discovery Partners Institute's research, public service, and economic development activities will address key grand challenges and/or the critical needs of industry, governmental and nongovernmental agencies, community and community-based agencies."

Discovery Partners Institute Mission Statement

To establish collaborative partnerships that address 21st century societal grand challenges, promote entrepreneurship, and educate the next-generation workforce.

The Discovery Partners Institute is a joint education, research, and innovation institute led by the University of Illinois System. According to University of Illinois officials, the Discovery Partners Institute is to serve as "an engine for equitable economic development in Chicagoland by building collaborative partnerships to address societal grand challenges through:

1. applied and translational research;
2. research-driven entrepreneurship and commercialization; and
3. talent development for the next-generation workforce."

Initial planning for the Discovery Partners Institute began under University of Illinois leadership in 2016. The creation of the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network, a system of connected university-community-industry-based hubs, was formally announced in October 2017.

The original plan called for the Discovery Partners Institute to be developed on a site along the Chicago River referred to as The 78. It is referred to as The 78 because, once developed, it will be the 78th neighborhood in Chicago. **Exhibit 4** provides a map of the location. The goal of the Discovery Partners Institute was to bring together top faculty in agriculture, healthcare, computing, and other critical fields from the University of Illinois System and partner universities. Dozens of new researchers were also to be added to connect with hundreds of businesses and thousands of students over time, as well as with entrepreneurs and venture capital firms. According to a Discovery Partners Institute press release, in addition to its headquarters, the site would include a mix of residential, office, retail, recreational, and cultural space adjacent to a half-mile river walk.

Exhibit 4
LOCATION OF THE 78 IN CHICAGO

Source: OAG prepared based on 2020-2021 Discovery Partners Institute Annual Report.

The Discovery Partners Institute bylaws state that the Institute was to seek solutions to urgent and long-term economic and social challenges in Chicago, the State of Illinois, and beyond. The Discovery Partners Institute's temporary institute status proposal states that the Discovery Partners Institute's mission is to establish collaborative partnerships that address 21st century societal grand challenges, promote entrepreneurship, and educate the next-generation workforce.

On February 19, 2019, a proposal was submitted to the University of Illinois System, University Senates Conference to formally establish the Discovery Partners Institute. It was noted that the Discovery Partners Institute would have national, international, and State of Illinois partners. The proposal stated committed partners included Hebrew University, Northwestern University, Tel Aviv University, the University of Chicago, and MS Ramaiah Medical College. In addition, the Discovery Partners Institute would be part of the Illinois Innovation Network, with hubs planned at each of the University of Illinois System locations, as well as other university partners in the State of Illinois. Northern Illinois University was already committed as of this proposal's submission.

In January 2020, Governor Pritzker released $235 million in capital funding for the proposed Discovery Partners Institute headquarters and $265 million for Illinois Innovation Network regional hubs. The funding was to be for new facilities to "accelerate job creation and economic growth through groundbreaking education, research and discovery." The funding was "made possible by the bipartisan Rebuild Illinois Capital program, with State Discovery Partners Institute investments matched dollar for dollar through university, private and philanthropic funding sources." According to the bylaws for the Discovery Partners Institute, which were adopted on February 4, 2021, the Discovery Partners Institute was approved by the Illinois Board of Higher Education to be a temporary institute and could apply for permanent institute status at the end of the five-year temporary period.

A strategic plan from the Illinois Innovation Network from September 2021 states the Discovery Partners Institute was to leverage the collective capacity of its partners to collaborate, innovate, and build the economy. The hub's description in the strategic plan included confirmation of constructing a new facility on University-owned property in Chicago. As one of 15 hubs in the Illinois Innovation Network, the Discovery Partners Institute was expected to develop workforce and education solutions for new economy talent, expand the diversity of the new economy talent pipeline, and transform the State's economy through research and innovation activities.

In March 2022, Related Midwest, the developer, donated the property for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters. The Discovery Partners Institute received the title to one acre of land in Chicago that is part of a 62-acre property known as The 78. In September 2022, the Discovery Partners Institute revised its real estate plans, reducing the building footprint to 200,000 square feet due to rising construction costs and budget considerations. As of March 2024, the Capital Development Board had issued requests for proposals for construction of the new headquarters. In late August 2024, the Capital Development Board selected Clark Construction Group – Chicago LLC to build the headquarters. **Finally, as discussed later in this report, on October 10, 2024, the University instructed the Capital Development Board to stop construction on the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters.**

According to the University of Illinois, the Discovery Partners Institute's Key objectives: research, entrepreneurship, and talent development for the next-generation workforce remained unchanged after the decision to cancel the headquarters. Since the decision in October 2024, the Discovery Partners Institute's focus, associated with these objectives, has been digital transformation and the future of computing (AI and Quantum technologies).

Discovery Partners Institute Expenditures

Legislative Audit Commission Resolution Number 168 asked the Auditor General to perform a comprehensive accounting of all expenditures of State monies by the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network, including assessing the adequacy and appropriateness of these expenditures. Auditors reviewed the Discovery Partners Institute's administrative and operational expenses related to State monies. According to documentation provided by the University of Illinois, **$11,815,882** in State appropriations were used for the Discovery Partners Institute's administrative and operational personnel costs from

FY18 through FY25 (as of January 2026). Auditors also determined that **$37,918,782** was expended by the State for design and construction management ($25,574,052) and construction costs ($12,344,730) for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters through FY25 (as of January 2026). **Therefore, total State appropriations used for the Discovery Partners Institute were $49.7 million.**

State Expenditures for the Discovery Partners Institute (Administrative and Operational)

Auditors determined that from FY18 through FY25 (as of January 2026), the Discovery Partners Institute expended nearly **$92 million** in total for administration and operations. As seen in **Exhibit 5**, the largest expenditure was approximately $47 million for salaries and wages. Of the $47 million for salaries and wages, 25 percent was from State appropriations.

Exhibit 5
ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATING EXPENDITURES FOR THE DISCOVERY PARTNERS INSTITUTE BY EXPENSE TYPE
FY18 through FY25 (as of January 2026)

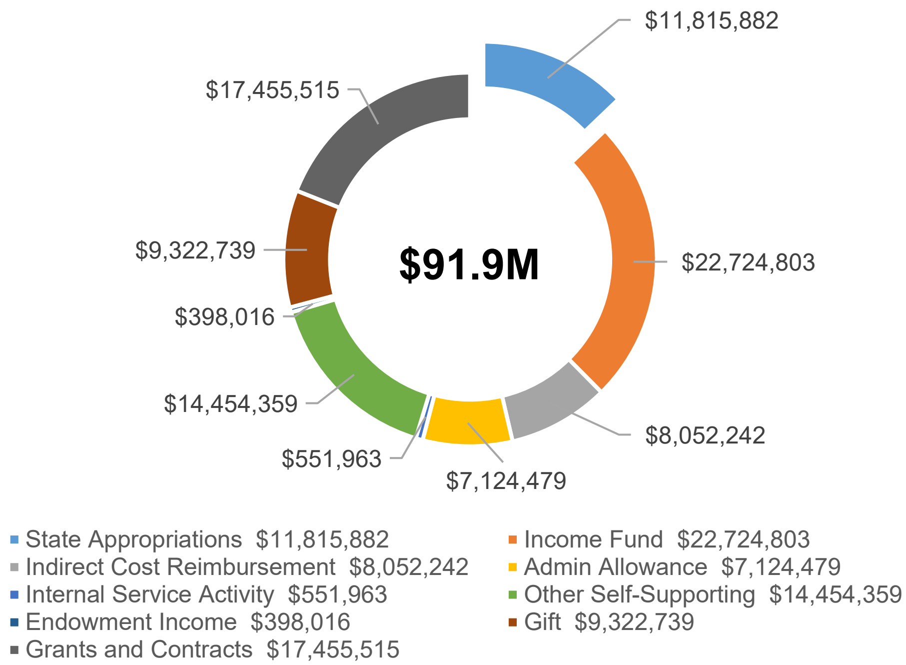
Expense Type	Total Expense
Miscellaneous	$277,051
Allowances	364,824
Non-Mandatory Transfers	512,905
Plant Expenditures	611,414
Transportation Services	710,383
Equipment/Software/Capital Lease	782,622
Indirect Costs Pool	3,283,843
Fringe Benefits	4,245,397
Materials and Supplies	5,520,637
General and Professional Services	28,928,284
Salaries and Wages[1]	46,662,638
Total	**$91,899,998**

[1] State appropriations for salaries and wages were $11.8 million. No other State appropriations were expended on administrative and operating expenses.

Source: University of Illinois documentation.

Overall, from FY18 through FY25, the portion of the Discovery Partners Institute administrative and operational costs paid from State appropriations was 13 percent ($11.8 million) of the $91.9 million in total expenditures (see **Exhibit 6**). These State appropriations were used for the Discovery Partners Institute's administrative and operational personnel costs. According to University of Illinois officials, the **State funds were used to pay for the Discovery Partners Institute leadership and staff**. These funds were from the Education Assistance Fund and are considered Institutional Appropriations. These funds are part of the broader State budget provided to the University of Illinois System to support general operations and mission-driven initiatives.

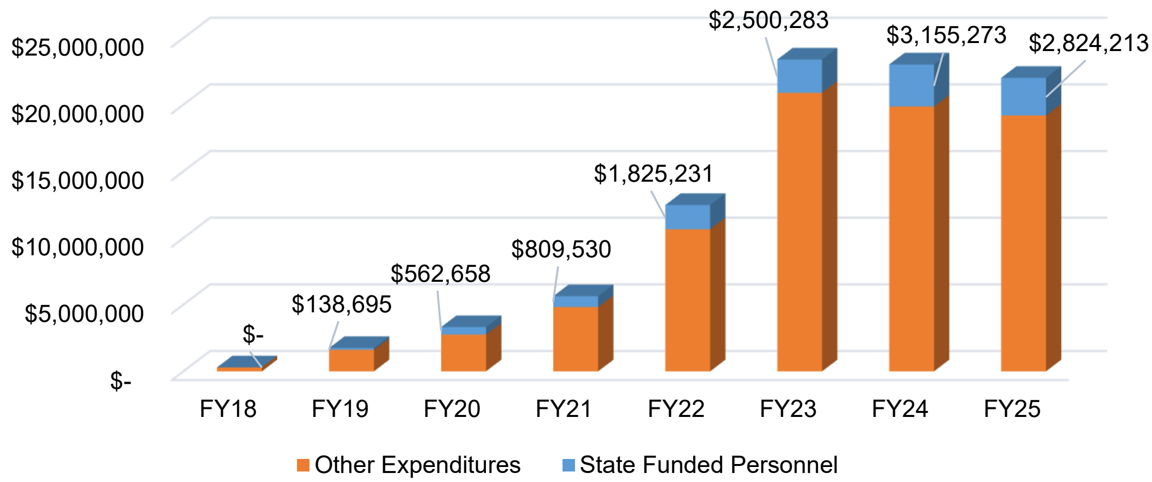
Exhibit 6
ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATING EXPENDITURES FOR THE DISCOVERY PARTNERS INSTITUTE BY FUNDING SOURCE
FY18 through FY25 (as of January 2026)



Source: University of Illinois documentation.

In FY24, 13.7 percent ($3.2 million) of operational costs were paid by State appropriations and were solely used for personnel for the Discovery Partners Institute, which was the most spent on personnel in any fiscal year. **Exhibit 7** shows the State appropriated expenditures used for a portion of personnel costs by fiscal year, compared with the remaining Discovery Partners Institute administrative and operational expenditures.

Exhibit 7
STATE APPROPRIATED EXPENDITURES FOR PERSONNEL COSTS BY FISCAL YEAR
FY18 through FY25 (as of January 2026)



Source: University of Illinois documentation.

State Construction Expenditures for the Discovery Partners Institute Headquarters

Throughout the design process of the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters project, the Capital Development Board forecasted estimates of the total cost of the project. During the Program Analysis phase, the Capital Development Board estimated the total project cost at $378 million. During the Schematic Design phase, the initial envisioned scope of the project was reduced, and consequently, the total construction estimate was reduced to $219 million. Over the course of the design process, the total construction estimate increased by 5 percent to almost $231 million, then ultimately dropped 10.4 percent to an estimate of $207 million when the construction bid was first advertised in March 2024.

During the design phase, there were issues with scope and cost creep. According to the Capital Development Board Project Manager assigned to the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters project, there were supposed to be three design options for the University of Illinois to choose from at the beginning of the design phase. The University did not like any of the proposed options except for one: a custom-designed egg-shaped building with an all-glass exterior. **Exhibit 8** is a rendering of the proposed design. The Capital Development Board Project Manager said the windows were all custom, and none of them were the same size.

Exhibit 8
RENDERING OF THE PROPOSED DISCOVERY PARTNERS INSTITUTE BUILDING

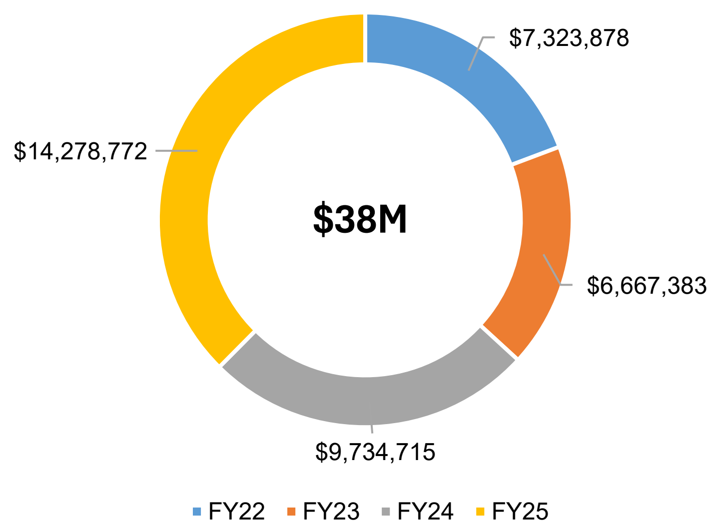
Source: University of Illinois System News.

The Capital Development Board and the University discussed different scope changes and cost-reducing measures, as there was not enough funding available to afford the initial design. Additionally, the University wanted to move in by a specific date. The measures discussed included reducing the number of floors and only finishing six of the eight floors, leaving two floors unfinished. The Project Manager told auditors that the discussions eventually reached a point where they were considering having multiple contractors for construction, including one solely for the glass and facade. By the time all options were assessed, the project was going to be off schedule.

Additionally, the Capital Development Board noted there were issues with land acquisition. Due to the way the building was designed, the building's footprint was expected to occupy the entire property acquired for the project. As a result, there was no space for staging, materials, and construction equipment. The proposed solution involved building out a road next to the property; however, this only added to the budgetary and schedule issues as prices were going up at the time, according to CDB.

Construction expenditures for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters project were almost entirely funded by State appropriations. As of January 2026, all but $85,966 of the $38,004,748 inception to date expenditures were State funded. Therefore, total State appropriated funds for the construction of the headquarters were $37,918,782. **Exhibit 9** shows the construction related expenditures for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters by fiscal year.

Exhibit 9
CONSTRUCTION EXPENDITURES FOR THE DISCOVERY PARTNERS INSTITUTE HEADQUARTERS BY FISCAL YEAR
Through FY25 (as of January 2026)



Note: All funding but $85,966 was from the State.

Source: University of Illinois documentation.

The Discovery Partners Institute headquarters project was cancelled in October 2024, about a month and a half after construction began (Clark was authorized to begin construction on August 22, 2024). According to information provided by the Capital Development Board and the University of Illinois, as of June 30, 2025, $38 million was spent on the project (see **Exhibit 10**). The majority of the expenditures (85.2%) were to Jacobs Consultants, Inc. (Jacobs) and Clark Construction Group – Chicago LLC (Clark). Jacobs was the architect/engineering company contracted to design the headquarters. Clark was the contractor and Turner-Descoto-Powers & Sons-Cullen Joint Venture (Turner) was the construction management firm. The remaining expenditures went to three architecture firms, which were awarded stipends for submitting design proposals.

Exhibit 10
THE DISCOVERY PARTNERS INSTITUTE HEADQUARTERS COST EXPENDITURES
By Contract as of June 30, 2025

Contractor	Expenditure
Jacobs Consultants, Inc.[1]	$20,039,231.97
Clark Construction Group – Chicago LLC[1]	12,344,730.00
Turner-Descoto-Powers & Sons-Cullen Joint Venture[1]	5,384,819.94
Johnson Lasky Kindelin Architects, Inc.	75,225.60
F+P Architects New York, Inc.	75,000.00
Studio Gang Architects, Ltd.	75,000.00
Chicago Title and Trust	10,740.40
Total	**$38,004,747.91**

[1] Includes construction administration fees as follows: Jacobs - $722,300; Clark - $359,555; and Turner - $391,900. These fees are charged by CDB for project oversight.

Source: Capital Development Board and the University of Illinois.

As noted in **Exhibit 10**, the expenditures for Jacobs, Clark, and Turner included construction administration fees (CAF) charged to projects for CDB oversight. As a result, once the CAF was subtracted, Jacobs was paid $19.3 million, Clark was paid almost $12.0 million, and Turner was paid almost $5.0 million. The actual payments made to all three of these contractors did not include the construction administration fees charged to projects for CDB oversight.

The total construction cost for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters was $12.3 million. As shown in **Exhibit 11**, Clark Construction was paid just under $12 million (not including a construction administration fee charged to projects for CDB oversight). The $6 million paid to Clark Construction (not subcontractors) included insurance, mobilization/demobilization and overhead costs, and profit.

Exhibit 11
CLARK CONSTRUCTION GROUP EXPENDITURES FOR THE DISCOVERY PARTNERS INSTITUTE HEADQUARTERS PROJECT

Expense	Total Expense
Subcontractors	$6,056,192
Bond	77,313
General Liability Insurance	191,763
Excess Insurance	371,076
Builder's Risk Insurance	26,546
Overhead/Mobilization/Demobilization	3,212,284
Profit	2,050,000
Clark Total	**$11,985,174**
Construction Administration Fee (CAF)	359,555
Total with CAF	**$12,344,730**

Note: The construction administration fee (CAF) is charged to projects for CDB oversight.

Source: Capital Development Board.

Clark Construction costs included payments to 25 subcontractors for supplies and labor totaling just over $6 million. Four subcontractors received over $4 million of the $6 million. These subcontractors provided:

- excavation services - labor, materials, haul-off ($1,709,225);
- electric - materials ($1,409,396);
- windows - materials ($746,532); and
- mechanical - materials ($519,860).

Discovery Partners Institute Purpose, Goals, and Impact

Legislative Audit Commission Resolution Number 168 asked auditors to conduct an assessment of the Discovery Partners Institute's purpose, goals, and impact to include documentation of the Discovery Partners Institute's original stated purpose and objective at its inception; records of any mission, strategic, or operational changes since the initiative began; performance assessments highlighting progress made toward achieving stated goals; and an assessment on the impact of any changes to its mission and projects since inception on the initiative and its funding to determine if the Discovery Partners Institute is meeting the purposes for which the State moneys were provided.

According to the Discovery Partners Institute bylaws adopted on February 4, 2021, the main purpose of the Discovery Partners Institute was to seek solutions to urgent and long-term economic and social challenges in Chicago, the State of Illinois, and beyond. The Discovery Partners Institute was intended to spur economic development, develop high-demand talent, drive applied research and development to solve complex problems, build Chicago's tech ecosystem, and bring together academic expertise and diverse communities to address such challenges. The Discovery Partners Institute was to prepare students and workers for high demand jobs, leverage Illinois' assets and its most experienced researchers to address pressing social and economic challenges and bring together industry and civic partners to strengthen economic development for the purposes of social betterment.

Auditors reviewed the annual reports issued by the Discovery Partners Institute during the audit period to assess the Discovery Partners Institute's purpose, goals, and impact. The annual reports from 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 contained varying details about the established goals of the Discovery Partners Institute, the Discovery Partners Institute's reported progress toward achieving those goals, and the corresponding impacts of any changes to the Discovery Partners Institute's mission and projects since inception. The Discovery Partners Institute's goals and progress toward achieving them were summarized in the Discovery Partners Institute's 2020-21 annual report (see **Appendix C**). However, subsequent annual reports did not provide similar detailed information and did not address whether it met any of its goals for these years. As a result, auditors could not determine if the yearly goals were met.

Due to the lack of information reported in the Discovery Partners Institute's annual reports related to achievement of goals, on January 22, 2026, auditors requested from the University of Illinois any analysis or reviews conducted that assessed whether the goals of the Discovery Partners Institute were met, or if there were any statistics or numbers to support achievement of any of the Discovery Partners Institute goals. On February 1, 2026, University of Illinois officials provided auditors with responses related to the Discovery Partners Institute's purpose, goals, and impact. Based on the University of Illinois's responses and due to the way the information was reported in the Discovery Partners Institute's annual reports from 2020-21 through 2023-24, auditors were not able to conduct a consistent year-to-year comparison of progress against stated goals and could not reconcile the information in the Discovery Partners Institute annual reports to the responses the University of Illinois provided below.

According to University of Illinois officials, the Discovery Partners Institute's original mission remains unchanged. University officials stated that since October 2024, the Discovery Partners Institute's focus has been digital transformation and the future of computing (AI and Quantum technologies). In terms of impact, though there have been no changes to the Discovery Partners Institute's mission and goals, State funds through FY25 were used for:

- catalyzing applied research and public-service initiatives;
- leveraging external federal, industry, and philanthropic funding; and
- supporting workforce and talent development aligned with State priorities.

The University of Illinois officials highlighted several statistics related to progress made toward achieving the stated goals and corresponding impacts on the Discovery Partners Institute's mission and purpose. According to University of Illinois officials, the Pritzker Tech Talent labs have impacted more than 5,000 participants thus far from 160+ Illinois schools, all seven City Colleges of Chicago, and multiple regional community colleges.

Within its key programs, University of Illinois officials stated that the Discovery Partners Institute has served:

- 1,600 students (K-12);
- 550 teachers (K-12);
- 550+ postsecondary students;
- 155 adult learners trained/upskilled; and
- 1,000+ additional participants in seminars and workshops.

Specific to the Pritzker Tech Talent Labs' programs, University of Illinois officials stated they achieved the following outcomes:

- 400+ high-school participants pursued four-year degrees, with 70 percent enrolled in technology-focused majors;
- 550+ teachers trained, expanding access to computer science instruction statewide; and
- 155 adult learners completed intensive workforce training.

The Discovery Partners Institute has achieved several other outcomes since its inception. The Discovery Partners Institute created:

- the Illinois Wastewater Surveillance System, which secured contracts with the Illinois Department of Public Health and Chicago Department of Public Health totaling approximately $11 million;
- the Clean Energy and Equitable Transportation Solutions Global Center at the Discovery Partners Institute was established with $11 million in joint research funding; and
- the Cannabis Research Institute with a $7 million grant from the State.

In response to the COVID pandemic, University of Illinois officials said that the Discovery Partners Institute served more than 40 corporations, 10 universities, and multiple K-12 systems via administering approximately five million tests and generating approximately $100 million in revenue. University of Illinois officials also said it helped form four start-ups and provided support to eight additional early-stage ventures.

According to University of Illinois officials, the Discovery Partners Institute has established multiple corporate partnerships. University officials also noted that faculty across the universities received external grants related to their Discovery Partners Institute projects totaling $17 million from FY18 through FY25.

The Discovery Partners Institute made progress toward achieving its established goals. A five-year summary report on the progress since inception for the three core goals was provided by the University of Illinois.

Decision to Stop Construction of the Discovery Partners Institute Headquarters

Based on the information provided by University of Illinois officials, no single document or recommendation was identified as determinative; therefore, the process used to make the decision to cancel the headquarters by its President is not overly clear. The main reason discussed was to provide a presence at the Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park. Other reasons, which were defined as presenting "significant risk," include: a significant drop in prices of existing office space in Chicago, no additional entities committed to The 78, and not having an intellectually-driven focus to the Discovery Partners Institute.

On October 18, 2024, University of Illinois System President Timothy Killeen announced that construction for the new Discovery Partners Institute headquarters at The 78 in downtown Chicago had stopped. Under the University's new vision, a new location called the Discovery Partners Institute South would be established at the planned Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park while maintaining the Discovery Partners Institute's current downtown Chicago headquarters located at 200 S. Wacker Drive. The current downtown headquarters would be referred to as the Discovery Partners Institute North while options for a new location are explored. The Discovery Partners Institute South will be a quantum-focused facility established in partnership with globally recognized companies.

Under the System's new vision, a new location known as Discovery Partners Institute South would be established at the planned Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park. At the same time, DPI would maintain its current headquarters, DPI North, at 200 S. Wacker Drive while options for a new long-term location are explored. Under the new vision, the leadership of DPI will transition to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Auditors asked University of Illinois officials why the scope of the Discovery Partners Institute project changed. Officials noted that it was President Timothy Killeen's decision to expand in this way and to move from The 78 to create two separate locations.

Additionally, officials noted that while working on moving the building on The 78 forward, they were made aware of the Governor's plans to invest in a new Quantum Park now known as the Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park. Officials noted that this "once in a lifetime opportunity" would benefit from having a Discovery Partners Institute presence at the Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park in order to bring the kind of resources the Discovery Partners Institute had been cultivating to this new work. Officials also noted:

- in order to provide a presence at the Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park, it became clear to officials that they could no longer continue building on The 78 and also afford a second Discovery Partners Institute location;
- the real estate market was simultaneously shifting, and it was determined that the University of Illinois could purchase a building for the headquarters of the

Discovery Partners Institute and create a presence at the Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park with a shift in real estate approach;

- the scope of the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters project was expanded to include a focus on "The Future of Computing;"
- workforce development, applied research, and entrepreneurship activities will remain; and
- basic research will be integrated into these activities to further hone in on focused work at the Discovery Partners Institute, with a focus on AI and other key technologies.

Auditors requested information and documentation related to the decision to cancel the headquarters from University of Illinois officials on numerous occasions. A very limited number of emails and other documents were provided related to how the decision to cancel the headquarters was made. After a meeting with officials, the President's calendar of meetings was provided; however, the calendar did not include agendas for any of the meetings.

Therefore, there was no specific information on why the headquarters was cancelled. As a result, auditors had difficulty identifying factors that affected the decision to cancel the project. During the review of emails and subsequent requests for additional documents, auditors identified three documents that discussed the move from the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters to the Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park:

1. A letter from the University of Illinois dated **October 10, 2024,** instructed the Director of CDB to stop construction of the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters.
2. A document from the Dean of the Grainger College of Engineering at the University of Illinois, which now oversees the Discovery Partners Institute. It was titled "Discovery Partners Institute – Future Vision for Impact – Option 2." It was attached to an email from **September 24, 2024**, 16 days prior to CDB being notified to stop the construction. It stated, "The revisioning of DPI should be decoupled from the current focus of a facility on The 78 as the sole mission of DPI." It also noted, "The path forward calls for UIUC to play the primary role and to lead, in partnership with the UI System, a reenvisioned DPI (consistent with the original goal). The DPI 2.0 would focus on being the "Beyond" **AI and Computing Institute of the Future** – with a deep focus on AI & GenAI and areas such as Automation, Microelectronics, Quantum Technologies, and other new paradigms such as Biological Computing." Most notably, it stated, "Planning should pivot away from building a DPI headquarters on The 78. To build more office spaces and dry labs on The 78, especially given the unforeseen real estate situation, **no additional entities committed to The 78, and most importantly, not having an intellectually-driven focus to DPI – presents significant risk to its future**. DPI should not be a hall mark facility, rather DPI is a bold vision and should be considered as a series of facilities across the Chicagoland area." [Emphasis

added.] According to University of Illinois officials, “this is a mix of secondary reasons and commentary from the proposal that the Dean put forward that had nothing to do with the decision.” Additionally, University officials noted, these individual comments from this document are “not what drove the decision. These were perspectives from one university leader.”

3. A document titled the Future of Computing, Digital Transformation, and AI-a Strategic Repositioning of DPI (draft-2). It was dated **October 13, 2024**, three days after CDB was notified of the decision. It recommended that “DPI pause all activities at The 78 and seek approval to use remaining funds for purchasing and renovating a building in the Loop and constructing new facilities at IQMP.” It further noted that “since 2019, the commercial real estate market in Chicago and nationally has undergone a substantial reset. Due to substantial remote work, many office buildings are underutilized, and companies are scaling back their physical footprint, leading to a significant drop in prices of existing office space. At the same time, costs of new construction have gone up substantially, thus completely changing the "build versus buy" calculation. We believe it is important for DPI to have a physical presence in Chicago, but a cost of $1,300 per square foot at The 78 does not favorably compare with the cost of purchasing and renovating an existing property in the Loop.”

Changes for the Vision at The 78

University of Illinois officials were aware in early 2024 that its vision of creating an “Innovation Hub” at The 78 might be changing when the space was being considered for a new White Sox stadium. Auditors identified an email from January 18, 2024, where the University of Illinois President was notified about the possibility of the Chicago White Sox building a new stadium on The 78. The email also noted that Deputy Governor Martin wanted a meeting to discuss it. A March 5, 2024 email from Timothy Killeen contained an attachment of an overview that included ideas on how the Discovery Partners Institute and the White Sox could be partners. This included supporting a new UIC College of Applied Health Sciences facility at The 78. This includes degree programs such as: Kinesiology, Physical Therapy, Nutrition, Rehabilitation Sciences, Disability and Human Development, Health Information Management, Health Informatics, Biometric Visualization, and Health Span Promotion.

Auditors identified numerous discussions related to the White Sox and The 78. Shortly after construction began on the Discovery Partners Institute, on September 16, 2024, a “new pop up field” was set up on the The 78 property and dignitaries were invited. This event was hosted by Related Midwest, the property developer. This happened after construction on the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters had already begun.

According to the Discovery Partners Institute’s 2020-2021 Annual Report, “DPI is working closely with Related Midwest, the Illinois Capital Development Board, and Chicago entities such as World Business Chicago to further refine the vision of the Innovation Hub and to make it a reality. During the next year, DPI’s focus will be on the design of the Innovation Hub and on generating interest from companies and others to locate at The 78.” Based on the documentation provided by the University of Illinois, it is unclear if a partnership with the White Sox would have furthered the stated goals and mission of the Discovery Partners Institute. However, the consideration of the partnership was consistent with the internal discussions held by University of Illinois officials related to the lack of entities committed to The 78.

Review of Discovery Partners Institute and Illinois Innovation Network Expenditures

Auditors identified 68 payments for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters and 225 payments for all the additional Illinois Innovation Network hubs combined. Auditors reviewed supporting documentation provided by the Capital Development Board for each payment and determined that payments were adequate, accurate, appropriate, and were properly monitored by the Capital Development Board. Additionally, auditors found that each payment from FY23 through FY25 was accountable and appeared accurately on the Illinois Office of the Comptroller's website.

Legislative Audit Commission Resolution Number 168 asked the Auditor General to perform a comprehensive accounting of all expenditures of State monies by the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network, assessing the adequacy and appropriateness of these expenditures. The Resolution also asked for a thorough evaluation of the allocation, utilization, and monitoring of the $500 million appropriated to the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and CDB by the Illinois General Assembly, ensuring accuracy and accountability.

In order to conduct a comprehensive accounting of all expenditures of State monies by the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network that assesses the adequacy and appropriateness of these expenditures, auditors reviewed all Discovery Partners Institute headquarters and Illinois Innovation Network payments. Auditors determined that all payments were properly monitored and approved by the Capital Development Board and included documentation to support the amounts paid. Additionally, auditors found that each payment from FY23 through FY25 was accountable and appeared accurately on the Illinois Office of the Comptroller's website.

The Capital Development Board provided auditors with contract numbers and invoice voucher information and supporting documentation for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters and Illinois Innovation Network hubs' projects. Using that information, auditors obtained all Capital Development Board expenditures from the Illinois Office of the Comptroller's website for the Discovery Partners Institute and Illinois Innovation Network hubs' projects. Auditors reviewed all Capital Development Board expenditures for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters and each Illinois Innovation Network hub as of November 2025. In total, there were 68 payments for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters and 225 payments for all the additional Illinois Innovation Network hubs combined. Auditors reviewed supporting documentation provided by the Capital Development Board for each payment and determined that payments were adequate, accurate, appropriate, and were properly monitored by the Capital Development Board.

Specifically, auditors reviewed invoice vouchers for each of the payments. Auditors determined the following for each invoice voucher:

- there was a corresponding payment for the same amount listed on the Illinois Office of the Comptroller's website;

- the invoice voucher was signed by the project manager; and
- there was evidence of documentation included with the invoice voucher to support the amount requested by the subcontractors.

Appendix A

Legislative Audit Commission Resolution Number 168

Legislative Audit Commission

RESOLUTION NO. 168
Presented by Senator Rose

WHEREAS, The University of Illinois System's Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) and Illinois Innovation Network (IIN) were established as interdisciplinary public-private research institutes under the leadership of University of Illinois President Tim Killeen; and

WHEREAS, The DPI initiative planned to build a headquarters in Chicago and a network of innovation hubs across Illinois, financed through state appropriations and private donations; and

WHEREAS, In 2016, planning for DPI commenced with the objective of establishing a collaborative institution fostering academic and business partnerships, as well as research and development, to prepare students for high-demand tech careers, and to facilitate applied research at its Chicago headquarters and IIN hubs; and

WHEREAS, On October 19, 2017, University of Illinois President Tim Killeen and Governor Bruce Rauner announced the launch of the DPI initiative, emphasizing its mission to leverage research, computing, and commercial resources to create economic opportunities across Illinois by integrating research and development assets from Carbondale to Chicago and linking them with sources of capital; and

WHEREAS, According to the Chicago Sun-Times in December of 2017, it was brought to the Governor's Office's attention that the original intent of the DPI initiative had changed substantially due to private donors' influence; and

WHEREAS, In May 2018, the Illinois Legislature's FY19 budget was approved, which included $500 million in capital funding for DPI and the establishment of IIN hubs across the state; and

WHEREAS, According to news outlets in August 2018, University of Illinois officials failed to provide lawmakers with clear answers regarding the DPI initiative. President Killeen outlined a proposal lacking concrete details, apart from indicating that the majority of the $500 million appropriated by the General Assembly would be allocated for building facilities in Chicago and upgrading existing infrastructure across the state; and

WHEREAS, According to the Illinois Public Media in October of 2018, President Killeen stated that the initial $6 million investment would be disbursed over four years and would not include state funding, which would primarily be used for staffing and other operating expenses; and

WHEREAS, In 2020 matching contributions from the state of Illinois, the University of Illinois System, private donors, and philanthropic sources brought the total investment to $1.2 billion; and

WHEREAS, On February 5, 2020, capital projects for IIN and DPI were released, allocating funds for various institutions and projects across Illinois; and

WHEREAS, In 2022, DPI announced its headquarters would anchor "The 78," a $7 billion megadevelopment in Chicago, with construction expected to begin by 2024; and

WHEREAS, In 2024 the Chicago Tribune released a statement from the University of Illinois affirming The 78 DPI project revision, which planned to split it between a new quantum technology campus on the far South Side and classroom and office space downtown; and

WHEREAS, On January 31st, 2025, the Chicago Sun-Times published a report revealing that Illinois taxpayers have incurred a loss exceeding $30 million due to the University of Illinois South Loop Project; and

WHEREAS, The DPI and IIN initiative's mission and projects have undergone numerous changes in the past eight years since its creation, altering the direction of the initiative and raising concerns about transparency in the use of taxpayer dollars; and

WHEREAS, Illinois residents deserve respect and transparency regarding the taxpayer funds used for DPI and IIN; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMISSION, that the Auditor General is directed to conduct a performance audit of the State monies provided to Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network to examine the entities' purpose and handling of funds appropriated by the General Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the audit include, but not be limited to, the following determinations:

1. A comprehensive accounting of all expenditures of State monies by the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network, assessing the adequacy and appropriateness of these expenditures;
2. A thorough evaluation of the allocation, utilization, and monitoring of the $500 million appropriated to the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the Capital Development Board by the Illinois General Assembly, ensuring accuracy and accountability; and
3. An assessment of DPI's Purpose, Goals, and Impact to include documentation of DPI's original stated purpose and objectives at its inception; records of any mission, strategic, or operational changes since the initiative began; performance assessments highlighting progress made toward achieving stated goals; and an assessment on the impact of any changes to its mission and projects since inception on the initiative and its funding to determine if DPI is meeting the purposes for which the State moneys were provided; and be it further

RESOLVED, That any State agency or entity having information relevant to this audit is urged to cooperate fully and promptly with the Auditor General's Office in the conduct of this audit; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Auditor General to commence this audit as soon as possible and report his findings and recommendations upon completion in accordance with the provisions of Section 3-14 of the Illinois State Auditing Act; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be delivered to the Auditor General and the relevant State agencies involved in DPI and IIN.

Adopted this 29th day of April, 2025

SIGNED ORIGINAL ON FILE	SIGNED ORIGINAL ON FILE
Senator Chapin Rose	Representative Fred Crespo
Co-Chair, Legislative Audit Commission	Co-Chair, Legislative Audit Commission

Appendix B
Audit Scope and Methodology

This audit was conducted in accordance with the audit standards promulgated by the Office of the Auditor General at 74 Ill. Adm. Code 420.310.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The audit's objectives are stated in the Legislative Audit Commission Resolution Number 168 (see **Appendix A**). The Resolution directed the Auditor General to conduct a performance audit of State monies provided to the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network to examine the entities' purpose and handling of funds appropriated by the General Assembly.

In conducting the audit, auditors reviewed statutes, administrative rules, and agency procedures for the University of Illinois and the Capital Development Board. There were no instances of noncompliance identified in the audit report. Auditors requested and reviewed specific documents related to the Illinois Innovation Network and the Discovery Partners Institute projects, including leadership communications, expenditure information, and internal planning documents,

Auditors reviewed management controls and assessed risk related to the audit's objectives. A risk assessment was conducted to identify areas that needed closer examination. Auditors examined the five components of internal control – control environment, risk assessment, control activities, information and communication, and monitoring – along with the underlying principles. Auditors found all components, apart from information and communication, which were not relevant, were significant to the audit objectives. Any deficiencies in internal control that were significant within the context of the audit objectives are discussed in the body of the report. Auditors assessed the risk of fraud occurring as related to the audit objectives and discussed these risks in an audit team meeting.

Auditors reviewed previous financial audits and compliance examinations of the University of Illinois and the Capital Development Board. During the review, auditors found that none of the financial and compliance findings were relevant to the determinations of Legislative Audit Commission Resolution Number 168.

During the audit, auditors held meetings and phone conferences with officials from the University of Illinois, the Capital Development Board, and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity indicated it received a $500 million appropriation in the FY19 budget; however, no funds were expended. According to Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity officials, beginning in FY20, the appropriation was transferred to the Capital Development Board who was responsible for administering the appropriation. Auditors met in-person with officials from the Capital Development Board to discuss their internal documentation system and the process used for approving Illinois Innovation Network and the Discovery Partners Institute payments. Auditors communicated with officials from the University of Illinois and the Capital Development Board on a continual basis via email, in-person meetings, and phone conferences to request documentation, follow up on fieldwork data, and discuss exceptions related to the audit determinations. Auditors also followed up with the Capital Development Board in more detail regarding testing related to the Illinois Innovation Network and the Discovery Partners Institute expenditures and shared all final testing exceptions with the Capital Development Board.

Auditors reviewed all Capital Development Board expenditures for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters and each Illinois Innovation Network hub to assess the adequacy and appropriateness of those expenditures. In total, there were 68 payments for the Discovery Partners Institute headquarters and 225 payments for all of the additional Illinois Innovation Network hubs combined. Auditors reviewed supporting documentation provided by the Capital Development Board for each payment and determined that payments were adequate, accurate, appropriate, and were properly monitored by the Capital Development Board.

Specifically, auditors reviewed invoice vouchers for each of the payments. Auditors determined the following for each invoice voucher:

- there was a corresponding payment for the same amount listed on the Illinois Office of the Comptroller's website;
- the invoice voucher was signed by the project manager; and
- there was evidence of documentation included with the invoice voucher to support the amount requested by the subcontractors.

Auditors shared the results of the expenditure testing with the Capital Development Board prior to the release of the report, and the auditors' analysis of the results are discussed within the report.

Auditors reviewed the Discovery Partners Institute's 2020-2021 through 2023-2024 annual reports and requested from the University of Illinois any internal analyses or reviews conducted that assessed whether the goals and mission of the Discovery Partners Institute were met. At the time of the audit work, annual reports from 2020-2021 through 2023-2024 were the only years for which annual reports were available. Auditors also requested changes made to the original stated mission and goals of the Discovery Partners Institute. Auditors reviewed the provided documentation to determine whether Discovery Partners Institute's goals were met and assessed the impact of any changes to Discovery Partners Institute's mission.

The dates of the Exit Conferences, along with the principal attendees, are noted below:

Exit Conference	**May 21, 2026**
Agency	**Name and Title**
University of Illinois	• Tim Killeen, President • Paul Ellinger, Vice President/Chief Financial Officer/Comptroller • Julie Zemaitis, Executive Director of University Audits • Brent Rasmus, Associate Vice President/Controller/Deputy Controller • Adrienne Nazon, Vice President of External Relations and Communications
Illinois Office of the Auditor General	• Scott Wahlbrink, Senior Audit Manager • Ryan Rizner, Audit Supervisor • Will Londrigan, Audit Staff

Exit Conference	**May 27, 2026**
Agency	**Name and Title**
Capital Development Board	• TJ Edwards, Executive Director • Darnita Lee, Chief of Staff • Lisa Hennigh, Deputy Director of Construction • Katheryn Martin, Deputy Director of Operations • Nicholas Klein, Assistant Deputy Director of Operations • Stacy Smith, Chief Internal Auditor
Illinois Office of the Auditor General	• Scott Wahlbrink, Senior Audit Manager • Geoff Piehl, Audit Manager • Ryan Rizner, Audit Supervisor • Will Londrigan, Audit Staff

Appendix C
Discovery Partners Institute Goals and Outcomes

Key Performance Indicator	Year 1 Target (FY20-21)	Year 1 Achievement (FY20-21)	Year 5 Target (FY25-26)
Pritzker Tech Talent Labs Workforce Education			
Number of undergrad students participating in High-School-to-Career Pathways programs	150	137	650
Percent of undergrad High-School-to-Career Pathways program participants underrepresented backgrounds	Establish baseline by major and underrepresented group	40% from underrepresented groups is our target	50% representation
High-School-to-Career Pathways participants Illinois job placement rate	10% higher than placement rate of comparable groups	We are establishing a data platform to track and measure outcomes	26% higher than placement rate
Number of learners participating in upskilling programs	600	402	2250
Upskilling Program Satisfaction (course evaluations, job placement survey)	10% higher satisfaction rate compared to non-PTTL coursework	Plan to use the Net Promoter Score to measure satisfaction (Target 60+)	35% higher satisfaction rate
Pritzker Tech Talent Labs Community Education			
Number of student participants in student programs	150	170	1000
Number of teacher participants in teacher programs	50	35	200
Applied Research			
Number of Science Teams	10	9	75
Research grants ($ millions)	5	1.25	100
Contracted research ($ millions)	5	5.5	100
Business Building			
Start-ups housed	-	3	20
Cumulative start-up funding ($ millions)	-	-	100
Corporate innovation facilities located at/near DPI	-	-	15

Note: The Pritzker Tech Talent Labs were funded by the Pritzker Foundation.

Source: 2020-2021 Discovery Partners Institute Annual Report.

Appendix D
Agency Response

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SYSTEM

Office of the President
364 Henry Administration Building
506 South Wright Street
Urbana, IL 61801-3689

June 9, 2026

Mr. Chris Meister
Illinois Auditor General
https://www.auditor.illinois.gov/About/description.asp

Dear Mr. Meister,

We appreciate the thorough and detailed work of the Office of the Auditor General and the Legislative Audit Commission. This review plays an important role in ensuring transparency and accountability in the use of public resources—an obligation the University of Illinois System takes seriously. We are pleased the report affirms that State expenditures supporting the Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) and the Illinois Innovation Network were appropriate, well-documented, and properly monitored.

The University of Illinois System shares the goal of maximizing the value of taxpayer investments for the benefit of Illinoisans. We are encouraged that this audit reflects that commitment and recognizes the progress made through these initiatives.

Over its first five years, the Discovery Partners Institute delivered meaningful and measurable results and significant progress on all its long-term goals. This progress was made across all of its core mission areas, including economic development, workforce development, research, and entrepreneurship, while remaining agile in response to new opportunities and the evolving needs of the state. We are proud of this strong foundation and grateful for the partnerships that have helped make this progress possible.

The decision to transition from the 78 site reflects a strategic evolution and nimbleness in response to changing conditions and emerging opportunities. By aligning DPI with new investments in artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, and the future of computing—including a presence at the Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park and a continued footprint in downtown Chicago—we are positioning the Institute to achieve even greater impact. We are confident this approach will bring even greater benefits for Illinois and the nation.

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CHICAGO: 200 S Wacker Drive Suite 3600 Chicago, IL
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Chris Meister
June 9, 2026
Page 2

We remain committed to responsible stewardship of public resources and to delivering long-term value for the people of Illinois.

SIGNED ORIGINAL ON FILE
Timothy L. Killeen
President

SIGNED ORIGINAL ON FILE
Paul N. Ellinger
Vice President, CFO & Comptroller

cc: Scott Wahlbrink, Senior Audit Manager

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