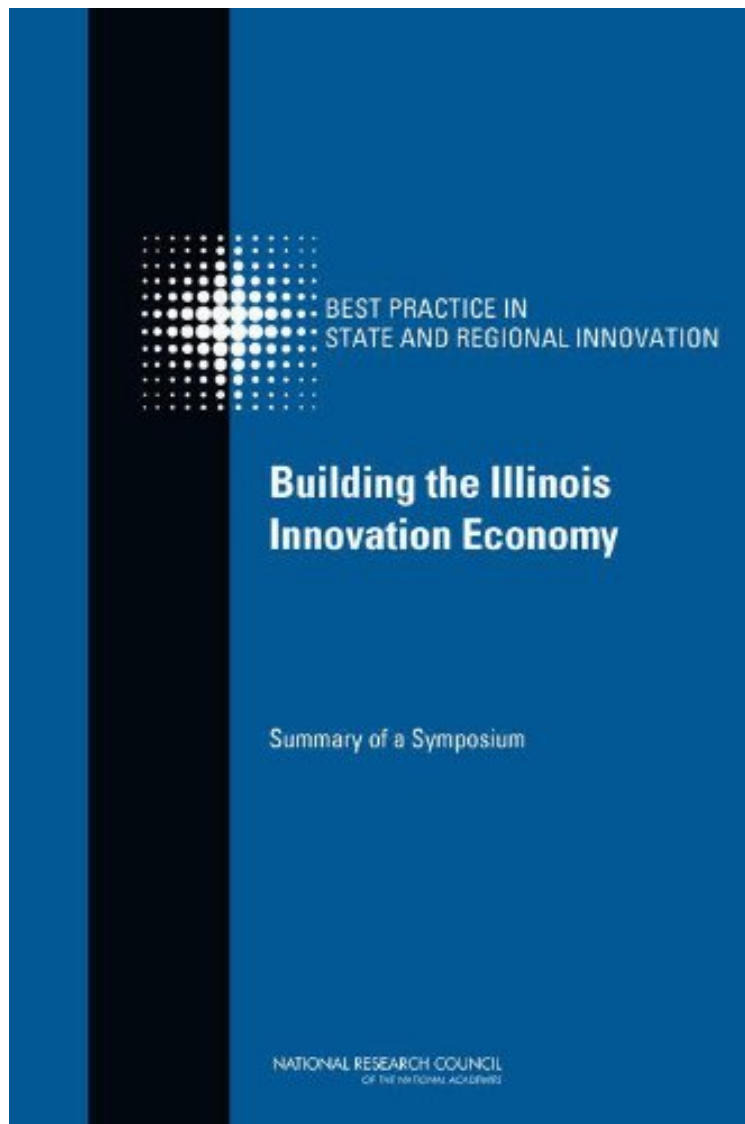


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Building the Illinois Innovation Economy: Summary of a Symposium

Charles W. Wessner, Committee on Competing in the 21st Century: Best Practice in State and Regional Innovation Initiatives, Technology, and Economic Policy Board on Science, Policy and Global Affairs, National Research Council

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Summary of a Symposium:

Responding to the challenges of fostering regional growth and employment in an increasingly competitive global economy, many U.S. states and regions have developed programs to attract and grow companies as well as attract the talent and resources necessary to develop innovation clusters. These state and regionally based initiatives have a broad range of goals and increasingly include significant resources, often with a sector focus and often in partnership with foundations and universities. These are being joined by recent initiatives to coordinate and concentrate investments from a variety of federal agencies that provide significant resources to develop regional centers of innovation, business incubators, and other strategies to encourage entrepreneurship and high-tech development. Building the Illinois Innovation Economy is a study of selected state and regional programs to identify best practices with regard to their goals, structures, instruments, modes of operation, synergies across private and public programs, funding mechanisms and levels, and evaluation efforts. This report reviews selected state and regional efforts to capitalize on federal and state investments in areas of critical national needs. This review includes both efforts to strengthen existing industries as well as specific new technology focus areas such as nanotechnology, stem cells, and energy in order to improve our understanding of program goals, challenges, and accomplishments. As a part of this review, The Committee on Competing in the 21st Century: Best Practice in State and Regional Innovation Initiatives is convening a series of public workshops and symposia involving responsible local, state, and federal officials and other stakeholders. These meetings and symposia will enable an exchange of views, information, experience, and analysis to identify best practice in the range of programs and incentives adopted. Building the Illinois Innovation Economy summarizes discussions at these symposia, fact-finding meetings, and commissioned analyses of existing state and regional programs and technology focus areas, the committee will subsequently produce a final report with findings and recommendations focused on lessons, issues, and opportunities for complementary U.S. policies created by these state and regional initiatives.